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“I’m always the unusual one”: Exploring the  
dialogic identities of male primary teachers

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements of the Manchester  
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Manchester Metropolitan University  
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## Abstract

During the past two decades, there has been a drive towards the recruitment of primary teachers from diverse backgrounds and experiences, including more men. Nevertheless, in 2016, 85% of teachers working in primary and nursery settings were female (DfE, 2017a), more men drop out of teacher training than women, although proportionally more are found in school leadership roles (DfE, 2017a). In order to bring meaning to teacher workforce statistics, research directs focus to male primary teachers' identities, claiming that dominant discourses pressurise men to display typical masculine behaviour within a feminised environment. The discourse positions men as 'high flyers', legitimising their career choice and swift promotion into management – by presenting them as role models for problematic boys, or as vulnerable in the workplace, struggling with a negative discourse that places them under scrutiny.

This thesis adds to our understanding of men's experience in the female-dominated space of the primary school through an exploration of the identity development and enactment of a group of male students as they progress from their final undergraduate year leading to qualified teacher status into their first year of teaching and beyond. Framing their narratives of becoming a teacher within Holland et al.'s (1998) theory of 'Figured Worlds', this thesis moves beyond assumption of fixed identities and performances that are determined by dominant gender discourses towards an emphasis on the dialogic nature of identity development: an ongoing 'self-in-practice'. It explores how the culture of the primary school is characterised by particular figures and values, where dominant discourses and narratives of self - make available and legitimise particular positional identities and performances for male teachers.

I argue that when men first enter primary schools they demonstrate resistance to their discursive positioning as 'unsuitable', negotiating hegemonic masculine discourse in order to reposition themselves as a successful teacher and valued male role model. However, over a time-frame of three years, my participants were able to create nuanced dialogic responses to their position within the primary school environment, beginning to disrupt prevailing discursive identities, and form their "own opinions" about what it means to be a male primary teacher.

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## List of abbreviations

ALT	The Association of Teachers and Lecturers
DfE	Department of Education
EU	European Union
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
NASUWT	The National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
PE	Physical Education
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate of Education
SBT	School-based Training
TA	Teaching Assistant
TDA	Teacher Development Agency
TSC	Teaching Schools Council
TTA	Teacher Training Agency
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
WLE	Women Leading In Education

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# 1 Introduction

This thesis explores the production and performance of beginning male primary teachers' dialogic identities within the world of primary school. Recognising that the primary school is a feminised workplace (Skelton, 2002), my research seeks to understand the interaction of social positioning and cultural models within male primary teachers' accounts of who they are. Through drawing on Holland et al.'s Figured Worlds theory, the study brings a focus to how people 'author' themselves and others through the manipulation of cultural resources, including gender discourses. Employing Bakhtin's (1981) concept of dialogism, which highlights how we are always in the process of being addressed by and responding to 'voices' that operate within the cultural and social world, this thesis provides an opportunity to discover how male teachers are creating answers to the world of primary teaching.

## 1.1 Research rationale: The Tale of Two Narratives

### Conversation with Frank, Teacher Education work colleague, September 2013

*Everyone was back from summer vacation and it was time to reflect on last year's achievements and issues, and plan in detail the academic year ahead. Frank starts the ball rolling: "Look at this list...All these boys failing their placement!" This leads onto a discussion as to why we think this might be happening, producing comments: "They are no good with the paperwork", "They're just lazy", and "They don't understand how hard this job is". Frank then laughs and concludes, "They must have something going for them - none of them have problems finding a job!"*

In September 2013, I had been working as a Senior Lecturer in Primary Education in a HEI for less than a year. Before this, I had been teaching in primary schools for fifteen years, working alongside male primary teachers and mentoring male primary education students. Over my time supporting trainee primary teachers as a teacher-mentor, I had experienced a number of male student teachers who had failed or only just passed their placement. Their struggles and professionalism had been the focus of many school staffroom conversations; thus, the comments in the above vignette did not come as a surprise. Moreover, the final comment from Frank was describing something that I had

witnessed first-hand. During my time as Acting Head teacher in a primary school, I had been involved in short-listing for a teaching post. This process involved a meeting with the governing body staffing committee to initially long list and then short list the potential candidates. During the first meeting, I had to clarify to two school governors that we needed to ensure that we focused on getting the right person for the school, irrespective of their gender. We could not look at particular applications from male teachers more favourably just because the governors felt “The school needed more men to provide a gender balance”.

Returning me to the comments made in the meeting with Frank is a conversation I had with Lucy, one of our final year undergraduate primary students, later on in the academic year:

#### Conversation with Lucy, June 2014

*“How’s the job hunting going?” I ask as Lucy pops her head around my office door. “Well not great. The last interview feedback was that the successful candidate had something different. Well, being the only female in a group of three men, there’s nothing I can do about that, can I?” We both laugh but it gets me thinking: Is it much harder for our female students to secure a job? Lucy continues to express concern about feeling pushed out of the job market by her male counterparts: “When I go and take a look around the school [before an interview] I check to see how many men the school has already employed. One there, one there, one there. Good, I might have a chance with this one!”*

I was increasingly aware of a growing trend both nationally and locally that suggested that early career male primary teachers found it difficult to be successful on school placement. However, those men that did pass their school-based training were securing their first teaching post very early in the recruitment cycle. Although the numbers of male students we had on our Primary Education programmes in the university where I worked seemed stable – around 10% of the cohort – there seemed to be a disparate amount of male students who were failing their placement or doing just enough to pass (Appendix 1). Moreover, I began to feel a growing sense of unease in relation to Lucy’s experiences of trying to secure her first teaching post. My encounter with Frank and

Lucy had piqued my interest in better understanding how male student teachers experience their primary school placements and how learning to 'fit' into this world builds further understanding of self and others. My university experiences and my time as a primary teacher have contributed to what Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (1998) call my 'history-in-person', shaping my perspectives and strengthening my commitment to ensuring that HEIs and schools were recruiting talented people into this challenging and exciting profession, irrespective of their gender (or class, race or sexual orientation).

As male teachers are numerically in the minority in primary schools (DfE, 2017a), I was interested in finding out how these male students described the process of being and becoming a primary teacher. My thesis serves as an attempt to understand this process with more clarity. In doing so I aim to offer some insight into how teacher educators and schools can help to support early career male primary teachers. At the heart of this study are the stories of a group of men learning to be, and eventually becoming primary teachers. Their narratives forge their identities through the telling of who they are in the world in which they act. Although the particulars of their stories are individual and unique, there are similarities with the experiences of others. Employing theory to explore various stages of the journey to becoming, being and continuing as male primary teachers, I began to understand that there is no final destination for these male teachers – the story of who we are is always unfinished.

## 1.2 The current context

### 1.2.1 Should we be worried?

Consider these statements: 14 per cent of the nursery and primary teachers in state-maintained schools in England are male (DfE, 2017a). Proportionally more men drop out of ITT than women (DfE, 2017b) and females are more likely to be in service after three years than males (Lynch et al., 2016). Comparatively, there are more male than female head teachers (DfE, 2017a) and, consequently, men earn more than women in primary teaching (ALT, 2014).

These statistics permeate the discourses that surround primary teaching, leading to headlines such as ‘Classrooms need more male teachers’ (Sellgren, 2016), ‘It’s cushy to be a male primary school teacher’ (Walker, 2015), and ‘Crisis in primary schools as almost a MILLION children don’t have a male teacher’ (Ellis, 2015). This thesis considers the experiences of men who have chosen to go to university to train to become primary teachers, directing the focus on how they understand themselves and others within the context of these powerful discourses.

As early as the mid-1800’s, primary teaching was considered ‘women’s work’, culturally associated with mothering and the nurturing of young children. Teaching in the 19th century was a step to take before a person embarked on ‘bigger and better’ things, such as a serious career or having a family (Rury, 1989, cited in Martino, 2008). Skelton (2002; 2012) explains how primary teaching is devalued in her definition of the concept ‘feminisation’ of education. She asserts that:

Often “feminisation” is used in an evaluative sense and carries the implicit message that the greater the female presence, the greater the likelihood of a “feminine” ethos and culture, and the more likely it is to discriminate against males. (2012:6)

Skelton argues that these essentialist ideas position the ‘feminisation’ of primary schooling largely as a “bad thing” which can be improved by increasing the numbers of male teachers, which would be a “good thing”.

Skelton's conceptualisation of the 'feminisation' of primary schooling contextualises much educational research to date, and it is often cited as a reason for the low number of men choosing this career (Cushman, 2005; TDA, 2008; Szwed, 2010). Moreover, trying to 'normalise' primary teaching and re-address the gender imbalance continues to be high upon the government agenda (Moosa and Bhana, 2017) and has led to a media-driven 'moral panic' (Szwed, 2010; O'Keeffe, 2016). This 'normalisation' of the profession assumes that it is abnormal to have an occupation that is more suited to one gender or social group. From the beginning of this decade, successive governments and policy-makers have tried and failed to increase the low number of men entering primary teaching as a means to stem the growing teacher recruitment crisis and to address the gender balance (McArdle, 2018). This has led to a flurry of teacher recruitment initiatives at the rate of nearly one per year (Dermott, 2011), all of which are argued to have had no discernible impact on the recruitment of males (Foster, 2017; The Committee of Public Accounts, 2018).

Data suggest that the number of men teaching in Britain mirrors Global North school statistics, with the percentage of female teachers in primary schools as high as 90% in 11 EU member countries (European Union News, 6 May 2017), whereas this is 64% globally (The World Bank, 2015). However, although current statistics show that although there are more female primary teachers than male both globally and in the UK, there is a disproportionate number of male senior leaders (The Future Leaders' Trust, 2015) with higher than average salaries (DfE, 2017a). Findings from Lynch et al. (2016) relating to recruiting and retaining the teacher workforce suggest that women in teaching have higher job satisfaction than men, exposing an underlying assumption that male teachers are dissatisfied in their choice of career. Drawing on masculinised assumptions that men are attracted to extrinsic factors when applying for jobs, many teacher training press releases emphasise the opportunities for rapid career enhancement and earning a good salary: "Teachers are twice as likely to be in management positions, than graduates in comparable professions after 3.5 years" (DfE, 2012; 2013). As part of the Government's 'Get Into Teaching' website, there is a section on career progression. Notably, five out of the seven case studies focus on the experiences of male teachers, all highlighting opportunities for rapid progression and

higher salary with headlines such as: ‘Leaping to head of department’ and ‘The rapid career climber’ (DfE, 2018).

The gendered division of labour, where a minority (men) are in charge of the majority (women), is visible within the data on school workforce and salary (DfE, 2017a). In answer to the current situation in schools, teaching unions and the DfE are calling for gender equality in teaching through challenging stereotypes and encouraging more women into leadership positions (TSC, 2018; NASUWT, 2018). Statistics show that men, whilst the minority in primary and nursery schools, are disproportionately in leadership positions as head teachers and deputies or assistant heads. In primary academies, the gendered division of labour is even clearer, where 17% of men are head teachers compared to 5% of women (Table 1, Appendix 2). This situation reflects in teachers’ average salaries, where males in local authority maintained nursery and primary schools in leadership and non-leadership roles now earn over £2,600 more than women do (Table 2, Appendix 2). In primary academies, the gender gap is even wider, standing over £4,700 (NASUWT, 2016). Chris Keates, General Secretary of the NASUWT clarified the situation at the NASUWT women’s conference in 2018: “Women make up the majority of the teaching profession, yet it is clear that too many are still facing unacceptable barriers and inequality in terms of their careers and professionalism” (NASUWT, 2018).

### 1.2.2 Living up to stereotypes

Although male teachers earn more and rise quickly through the ranks, they do not seem to want to stay in the profession for very long. Returning to the findings from Lynch et al. (2016), there are growing concerns about the retention of male teachers after five years of teaching. Addressing this issue, this thesis is able to draw attention to the experiences of male primary teachers over a number of years in the profession, providing an opportunity to question the masculinised assumptions that shape the discourses that propose male teachers will continue to teach if their pay and chances of promotion are increased.

It is widely acknowledged that driving governmental teacher recruitment and retention policy are gendered assumptions that schools need men because they teach and behave differently to female teachers, and that children will respond positively to them if they behave like a 'real man' (Martino, 2008; Skelton, 2009; McGrath and Sinclair, 2013; Bullough Jr, 2015; O'Keeffe, 2016). Governmental programmes that encourage ex-service personnel and rugby coaches to enter the teaching profession in order to create a 'military ethos' in schools (DfE, 2010) and 'build grit in pupils' (DfE, 2015) do not explicitly target men. However, there is an implication that such programmes are set to encourage males into teaching through association with masculinised performances and roles.

Dermott (2011), in her work analysing the impact of the 'Troops to Teaching' (DfE, 2010) programme based on the US teacher recruitment drive established in 1994, argues that the government views working class masculinity as potentially problematic in the classroom. The programme advocates the redeployment of service leavers into schools in order to instil in children: "leadership, discipline, motivation and teamwork" (DfE, 2010), implying that this is currently lacking in schools. Dermott, citing Johnson (2010), notes that the 'symbiotic relationship' between military and masculinity promotes and embodies stereotypical masculine traits such as discipline, heterosexuality, physical and mental strength and braveness. These types of recruitment and retention programmes assume, 'any man will do as long as it's a man' and suggests: "men are often viewed in terms of their inherent 'male' qualities rather than personal attributes" (Hepburn, 2013). Moreover, the dominant gender discourses shaping teacher recruitment and retention 'package' teaching as an acceptable masculine activity.

As early as 1990, there was a "pre-occupation with 'failing boys' as the new disadvantaged" (Younger and Warrington, 2008:429). Since the late 1980's in the UK and replicated elsewhere internationally, girls on average perform better academically than boys do (PARITY, 2013; UCAS, 2016). This has created a discourse of 'poor boys', especially white, working class males (DfE, 2016) being considered at a disadvantage in schools due to the dominance of female teachers and the "feminine, frilly content" of the curriculum (Connell, 1995:212). Moreover, to counteract the media-driven moral panic stemming from the discourse of a perceived threat to the success and



development of male pupils, policy-makers have focused on the personalisation of boys' needs and their "boredom, distraction, disaffection" in school (Brown, 2006). The call for more male teachers to enhance the academic performance and motivation of boys is an argument that has been widely used by successive governments to inform their teacher recruitment programmes. However, available empirical evidence indicates that the gender of a teacher has little effect on the academic achievement of pupils (Carrington et al. 2007; Carrington, Tymms, and Merrell, 2008; Drudy, 2008; McGrath and Sinclair, 2013).

Within the call for more male teachers in primary schools is the suggestion that boys need male role models as father figures to counteract dysfunctional family circumstances. In parallel with the discourse about absent fathers is the associated viewpoint relating to the damage done by 'good-for-nothing' fathers, considered another reason for our allegedly 'broken society' (Warin, 2017). The assumptions within these prevailing discourses propose that it is the role of males to turn boys into 'fine young men' (Mills et al. 2004) and with an absent or feckless father, male primary teachers undertake this responsibility. A plea for more men in primary teaching has been rationalised in relation to these discourses. Reports suggests that a lack of a parental role model drives young people – majority boys – to join gangs (The Prince's Trust; 2008), and the absence of males in families and classroom is an "ignored form of deprivation that can have profoundly damaging consequences on social and mental development" (The Centre for Social Justice, 2013). These reports continue to reinforce the popular view that male primary teachers need to play a role in civilising children, especially boys, to prevent societal breakdown.

This section has demonstrated how men who choose to teach move into a world considered feminised where they must contend with dominant discourses that position them as both heroes and villains. Moreover, the publicly voiced rhetoric that supports the call for more male teachers places particular gendered expectations on their assumed roles and responsibilities. Positioning them in such a way fails to take into account the complex relations between being a man and being a beginning primary school teacher. Treating all male primary teachers as one homogenous group obscures individual difference and ignores the importance of understanding themselves in

relation to others. Hence, this thesis aims to understand how male primary teachers begin to negotiate the assumptions made about them as men within the activity of learning to be a teacher.

### 1.3 My thesis

I argue that powerful gender discourses that operate within the primary school shape male primary teachers' identity production and performances. As early career teachers, men working with young children are subject to dominant gender discourses that simultaneously idealise and demonise them: consequently, they struggle to find a comfortable 'fit' within the primary school. However, through evocations of hegemonic masculine productions and performances, some male primary teachers are able to create a response to the dominant discourses and manoeuvre themselves into positions that are more comfortable. Moreover, after a number of years teaching in primary schools, male teachers may be able to enact some agency to create improvised identities that provide contradictory stances to essentialised 'real men' positions. Their new self-understandings represent a way to 'be' that seems to be formed both within dominant gender discourses and within themselves.

Hence, my thesis is titled:

**"I'm always the unusual one": Exploring the dialogic identities of male primary teachers**

As my aim is to understand the complexities of being and becoming a male primary teacher, this thesis explores the world of the primary school from the viewpoint of the men who teach there. Data gathered from semi-structured interviews of five male primary education students and two Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) provide opportunities to explore how individuals come to understand themselves and others within the world of the primary school.

### 1.4 Organisation of the thesis

**Chapter 2:** This chapter attempts to find answers to the question: 'What's it like being a male primary teacher?' through an exploration of current literature in the field. It initially focuses on theoretical developments in gender and educational research to

understand and situate the concept of gender in the identity development and experiences of men teaching in primary schools. I then place an emphasis on literature that examines the experiences men have in becoming and being primary teachers, and how they may employ some personal agency in order to position themselves amongst the available discursive positions. Finally, I note omissions in the literature, which helps to develop my initial research questions. These were:

- What views do early career male primary teachers have of themselves and the job they have chosen?
- How do these men talk about gender discourses in their accounts of being a teacher? What role do these gender discourses play?
- How do their ideas of the teacher they want to be develop over time?

**Chapter 3:** In this chapter, I demonstrate how my chosen theoretical lens supports the analysis of male primary teachers' responses to discursive positioning and what opportunities for professional and personal agency were available for them. Drawing on the work of Becky Francis (2008b; 2010; 2012) around gender monoglossia and heteroglossia, and Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain's (1998) theory of Figured Worlds, brings focus to identity and agency and, notably, the positioning of individuals within local contexts. I first outline Francis's understanding of 'gender heteroglossia', which interrogates the usefulness of the current discursive approach to gender through an application of Bakhtin's (1981; 1986) concepts of dialogism and heteroglossia. Next, I explore the use of these concepts in Holland et al.'s (1998) theory of Figured Worlds. Finally, I operationalise the theory within the context of my study, helping to refine my research questions. My reworked research questions became:

- How do early career male teachers describe their positionality in the primary school?
- To what extent do these men describe possibilities to mediate agency in their accounts of being a teacher?
- How does male primary teachers' self-authoring change over time?

**Chapter 4:** This chapter describes the methodological approach taken in this study. It explores the methodological decisions made that support the collection, analysis and presentation of data, and it outlines the methods of participant selection, data collection and analytical procedures. Within this chapter, I consider how undertaking this research, from forming an interpretative approach - to recruiting and interviewing participants - and analysing and representing data, has shaped my own identity as a researcher.

**Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8** analyse how seven male primary teachers figured their worlds of work and their positions in it. They explore how these men talk about the dominant gender discourses that operate within primary schools, and the role these discourses play in their accounts of being a teacher.

**Chapter 5:** The first analysis chapter focuses on Ryan's story, which typifies those found in previous research. He describes how he struggled to fit into a world where others questioned his practice and performance. His account of his time before and during his teacher training exposes the multiplicity of voices that have positioned him with strength and power, but also as lazy and unable. His narrative exposes the normative forces of hegemonic masculinity that he draws on to counteract his discomfort in being positioned as 'lesser than' as a student teacher. Paying close attention to the multiplicity of voices in his story reveals how he responds to them in order to reposition himself within the discursive environment.

**Chapter 6:** The second analysis chapter comprises accounts of the other male primary teachers, also at the start of their teaching careers. Like Ryan, they chose to tell me stories of struggling to fit into the figured world and the difficulties they had with their everyday practice in the classroom. They also draw on dominant gender discourses as a response to their lesser positioning. However, unlike Ryan, some begin to recognise and challenge the gender privileges that brings advantages for them as men.

**Chapter 7:** The third analysis chapter features the story of Tony who taught pre-school children. His account describes feelings of confusion and conflict as he tries to make sense of his professional and personal identity in terms of being a man and a primary

teacher. Tony's narrative is illustrative of being unable to reconcile the 'burden' of having 'natural' masculinised roles imposed on him.

**Chapter 8:** The final analysis chapter focuses on how the male primary teachers in this study describe the figured world of primary school after a number of years teaching within it. Their accounts demonstrate how they have been able to adjust to the difficulties of their situation, orchestrating the dominant gender discourses differently in an alternative 'space of authoring'.

**Chapter 9:** This final chapter presents the conclusions of this study through revisiting my research questions and my key findings. I reflect on my theoretical lens and the implications for both research and teacher training policy and practice. In addition, I consider the impact this research journey has had on my own identity and acknowledge the limitations of this thesis whilst making suggestions for future research.

## 2 Literature review: What is it like being a male primary teacher?

This literature review begins by focusing on theoretical developments in gender and educational research in order to understand the concept of gender in more depth and its role in the identity development and experiences of men teaching in primary schools. I then turn to look at what research indicates about experience of these men whilst training and working within the primary classroom. Finally, I note gaps in the literature, and their role developing my research questions.

Researchers acknowledge gender as significant in both how schools operate and in the experiences of teachers and pupils (Connell, 1987, 2000, 2005, Connell and Pearse 2015; Skelton, 2002, 2007, 2012; Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2013; Francis, 2008a, Francis and Paechter, 2015; Burn and Pratt-Adams, 2015). There is a common understanding that social, historical and cultural constructions of gender are reflected in school organisation and practices, including teachers' work. I use these ideas about the importance of gender to structure this review, focusing on understanding how gender and education has been theorised and analysed over the last 30 years in relation to male primary teachers' identity construction, positioning and performances. Contrasting earlier and more current studies in this field illustrates the continuing dominance of 'common-sense' assumptions about the 'natural' characteristics of male primary teachers that enable them to bring something unique to teaching by virtue of being men. I highlight the importance of looking beyond these dominant gender discourses, noting instead the complex nature of being a male primary teacher.

### 2.1 Theoretical developments in gender and education: early feminist work

Early work on gender analysis in education carried out by feminist researchers suggests that school life reproduces gender inequalities found within society, patriarchy being a key force in structuring these unequal relations between men and women and boys and girls (Stanworth, 1981; Barrett, 1980 cited in Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2013). In their review of gender theory and education, Francis and Paechter (2015) argue that the initial

use of sex role theory by feminist researchers was problematic as it assumed 'natural' ways of being and behaving for men and women, linked to their corporeal bodies. Consequently, they note, this early approach to understanding inequalities between male and female teachers and pupils did not allow for any differences in behaviour between men and women. However, Francis and Paechter suggest that the development of the concept of 'gender' as a social structure by Stoller (1968) and Oakley (1972) moved second-wave feminist research forward to be able to consider the diverse ways in which different groups of people, for example, men and women, exist within institutions such as schools. Similarly, Connell and Pearse (2015), in their overview of gender studies, highlight the importance of early feminist researchers' shift from using sex role theory to understanding gender as a social structure with recognisable patterns of social relations and behaviours that shape participation in everyday activities.

Separating identities from bodies meant that researchers could begin to explain why there was an uneven difference between people in different societies and cultures in terms of power, socio-economic status and cultural representations. Moreover, of central importance in second-wave feminist research was the acknowledgement of gender as a social structure, multidimensional in form, differing from one culture to the next, and shifting between different places, highlighting the valorisation of masculinity above femininity in Western culture. In relation to education, Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (2013) illustrate this new feminist thinking as showing how schools as social places reflect the hierarchical gendered social order, positioning men as high status and with power stemming from patriarchal discourses. Furthermore, they note how influential patriarchy was in shaping second-wave feminist research in terms of the distribution of automatic power to men. Feminist educational research found patriarchy to be significant in creating unequal relationships between male and female teachers and boys and girls, enabling unequal access to social positions in school and access to the school curriculum (Connell, 1987; Walkerdine, 1990). In addition, Alexander (1988, cited in Burn and Pratt-Adams, 2015) notes that patriarchal forces generate historical familial discourses in schools that position men as father figures and role models and women as mothers.

Although this new thinking in research emphasised the production of gender identities and practices within schools, it has been characterised as inadequate in capturing the diversity found within gender categories of male/female (Francis and Paechter, 2015). Additionally, Connell and Pearse (2015) suggest that both sex role theory and social reproduction theory used by second wave feminist researchers assumes gender is definite and unchanging, with a clear separation between male and female. Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (2013) concur, outlining how social movements such as feminism and its theoretical ideas about identities, assume that all men and all women share a collective identity and fixed positions within social hierarchies. They note how this feminist position assumes that power relations are logical and predicable. Early analysis of gender led to an application of a post-structural lens in later pro/feminist research, bringing a much-needed focus to the intricacies of gender identity categorisation and construction.

## 2.2 Challenging dualistic ideas of masculinity and femininity: a post-structural approach

The use of a post-structural approach in accounts of gender and education meant that researchers began to think of identities, including gender identities, as always in the process of being constructed, emphasising that human activity creates new situations, new behaviours and consequently new knowledge about people (Walkerdine, 1990; Jones and Barron, 2007). This theoretical position categorises gender as a social construct, developed within specific contexts, and interacting with other social relations, such as 'class' and 'race'. Furthermore, this theoretical position situates gender within the social, recognising the fluidity and multiplicity of gender production and performance, breaking the link between gender and the body (Butler, 2004). This new feminist thinking moves beyond the idea of binary opposites and into a space where identities are conceptualised as, "shifting, ebbing and flowing in different situations that allow different forms of understanding to emerge" (Jones and Barron, 2007:78). The work of Michel Foucault had a 'profound effect' (Francis and Paechter, 2015:777) on this new wave of gender and educational research. His ideas relating to discourse and power began to enable researchers to explain the multiplicity of power relations between men and women/ masculinity and femininity within social life, including within schools.



### 2.2.1 Discourse and power

Post-structural feminist researchers turned to Foucault's ideas about discourse and power to help frame their exploration of male and female teachers' identity construction and practice in primary schools. According to Foucault (1976), discourse represents a collectively understood language for talking about and legitimising certain statements and practices in specific contexts. Hence, discourse is a way of organising sociocultural and historical knowledge through language, and through practices. Foucault links discourses to power, noting that power is not static as social power can be 'won' in how individuals take up, internalise and perform certain 'regimes of truth' (Foucault, 1978). Rabinow (1991) clarifies Foucault's ideas, asserting that each society has categories of discourse that are accepted as 'general truths' used to classify what is important and valued and what needs to be disregarded. Rabinow notes that these 'truths' also bring power to those who are able to establish a legitimate connection with them, positioning and identifying people with status. Additionally, Gutting, (2005: 50) suggests that Foucault's work recognises that thoughts about the self and others change through the social forces that control the behaviour of individuals. Furthermore, Foucault (2000) argues, the positioning of people occurs in relation to the embodiment of power and knowledge and through their ability to exercise power, legitimately accrue, and display socially accepted privileged knowledge. Hence, the exercising of power occurs discursively through social relations.

Data from Francis's (2008a) study into male teachers' gendered subjectivities and performances demonstrates Foucault's idea that knowledge is interrelated with power. She illustrates this through reference to the case study of Mr Adams, a male primary teacher who constructs himself as holding privileged and 'authentic' knowledge. Additionally, Mr Adams positions the children relationally as deficient of privileged knowledge. Referring to Walkerdine, (1990), Francis considers how the children are positioned as Other, as lacking, in Mr Adams' construction of himself as the authentic possessor of knowledge and the relations of power this position enables. The construction and positioning of Mr Adams as, "knower and keeper of knowledge", is arguably an overwhelmingly masculinized one (Harding, 1991, cited by Francis, 2008a:

113) and in Mr Adams case, is maintained via his recurrent sarcastic and disapproving comments to pupils of both sexes.

Francis's case study illustrates Foucault's point that power connects to what we assume to be 'true' or 'false' about knowing how people behave, how we know things and crucially, how we know ourselves. The power produced by discourses can categorise people and behaviours and give us a sense of what we collectively believe to be 'true' or 'false' about individuals, groups or practices. Hence, power is not a thing but a relation (Foucault, 1976: 112). For example, returning to the historical context of men teaching in primary schools, The Plowden Report (CACE, 1967) can be said to be contributing to a commonly held 'truth' that primary teaching is for women in its call for more 'brave' men to enter into the profession. Additionally, Burn and Pratt-Adams (2015) note that control of 'taken-for-granted' knowledge oppresses particular social groups – in this case, women – strategically maintaining their limited access to power and status. Hence, the importance of discourses from a Foucauldian perspective recognises that discursive practices have the power to shape identities through an acceptance and the 'living' of these discourses, which in turn maintains power differentials amongst individuals and groups (Smedley, 2007).

### 2.2.2 Gender identities

Gender, as a "social structure of a particular kind" (Connell and Pearse, 2015:11), is bound within specific cultural, social and historical contexts (Connell, 2005:4), which means men and women are categorised as masculine and feminine, terms that are embedded with cultural, social and historical messages about power, positioning and practice. Furthermore, Connell and Pearse suggest that gender is taken for granted in everyday life; as gender relations and gender practices become so familiar within specific cultures they can seem 'natural', and those that do not fall into this 'natural' way of being and behaving are 'punished' in some way. Moreover, Connell and Pearse's conceptualisation of gender helps articulate how recognised gender 'truths' about masculinity and femininity have the power to position men and women and practices associated with masculinity and femininity differently. Consequently, they note that

dominant gender discourses have the power to legitimate particular gender identities and practices at specific times and places, while at the same time excluding others.

In schools, dominant gender discourses reflect gendered social relations. These are visible in staffing structures, curriculum and assessment design and pedagogy (Skelton, 2002; Martino, 2008; Burn and Pratt-Adams, 2015). Christine Skelton clarifies the idea of feminisation of primary teaching in her seminal work in 2002, where she asserts that education policy polarises recognised ideas of masculinity and femininity. She draws on her findings where male trainee teachers described the primary school environment as feminised. However, Skelton points out that feminisation means more than a numerical dominance of females in the workplace as she argues it also references the feminine cultural values and teaching styles that seemingly dominate primary education, promoting particular learning conditions that privilege girls above boys. Running alongside this discourse of the feminisation of primary teaching are negative subtexts proposing the detrimental impact on boys' educational chances and the devaluing of female teachers' classroom practice (Durdy, 2008; Skelton, 2012).

Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (2013) argue that schools are masculinised workplaces, asserting that the 'institutional restructuring' of English schools can be culturally understood as a 'remasculinisation' of processes and practices within particular spaces in schools. Citing Whitehead (2002), they suggest that the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment within schools reflects 'masculinism', where competition, outcome, achievement, work ethic and performativity brings purpose and defines education. Drawing on Mac an Ghaill's (1994) study of male teachers, they suggest that the culture permeating schooling today calls for men to be 'The New Entrepreneurs', 'ideal teachers' who display discursive practices of managerial efficiency and economic rationality (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2013:90). Their idea of a 'remasculinisation of schooling' reflects ideas of Skelton (2002) and Drudy (2008), who both argue that political attempts to restructure teaching within a whirlwind of neoliberal educational reforms has led to a gender discourses that value 'hard masculine' roles such as 'budget holder', 'Key Stage tester', 'subject leader' and 'Computing expert'. They note that dominant gender discourses associate these managerial roles with male teachers and

their practice. Consequently, with the recognition that discursive power is relational, 'soft' roles such as social worker and councillor, associated with femininity and female teachers, become devalued (Skelton, 2002; 2003; Drudy, 2008).

According to Foucault (2000), discourses do not act in a straightforward manner, as at any one time there will be a multitude of competing and contrasting discourses operating in different areas of social life. Due to their complexity, Foucault suggests the idea of a two-way process, as discourses can convey, produce, and strengthen power of individuals and groups, but at the same time destabilise power. He notes that this is because opposing discourses can weaken dominant discourses through their very existence as they compete for power in a strategic and war-like way. Gender, as a social construct, is also open to these multiple 'truths' generated within specific settings (Burn and Pratt-Adams, 2015). Francis and Paechter (2015) assert that the multiplicity of gender discourses operating in different areas of social life, such as schooling, highlights the limited use of dualistic notions of masculine and feminine to explain gender identities and practice. For post-structural pro/feminist researchers exploring male teacher identities and practice, this brings an awareness of the volatility of what it means to be male and female.

### 2.3 Understanding multiple masculinities and femininities: Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity

To reflect the idea of a multiplicity of discourses, gender theory employs the use of pluralised 'masculinities' and 'femininities', helping to explore the diversity within gender identities operating in different contexts. The most influential work in exploring masculinities and femininities comes from RW Connell, who during the early 1980's began to consider the relationship between men's bodies, masculinities and the role of men in politics. Her work begins to capture the diversity within gender categories in the idea of a hierarchy of masculinities existing within institutions, with hegemonic masculinity, legitimised by patriarchy, dominating other masculinities. Her notion of hegemonic masculinity has since influenced many researchers across a number of academic fields, helping to make sense of alternative masculinities, detached from hegemonic masculinity and embedded within relations of power. Much educational

research employs the concept of hegemonic masculinity situated within multiple masculinities to bring further understanding to classroom life and the identity construction and development of certain specific groups, such as disaffected boys and male teachers (Jones, 2007; Martino, 2008; Haase, 2008; Jackson, 2010). Thus, it is important to explore the concept of multiple masculinities in this review.

Connell (1987:17) argues that patriarchy is a source of identity formation. Her ideas differ from cultural and biological theories of identity construction as they consider how “personal life and collective social arrangements” come together to help people identify themselves and others. Gender relations, from Connell’s perspective, brings understanding to constructions of masculinities and femininities situated within school structures and the historical context of schooling (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2013). Shifting her focus of the construction of gender identities and practices to a local level allows Connell (1987) to contest the binarised notion of masculine and feminine. Instead, she offers a nuanced understanding of how men relate to women and vice versa and how the continued dominance of men over women is embedded within institutional social relations. Furthermore, she argues that men’s dominance over women in organisations is visible within the regular social arrangements, which she entitles ‘gender regimes’.

### 2.3.1 Gender regimes

Connell (1987) asserts that gender regimes are entrenched within daily school functions: its hierarchy, communication and assessment systems, and division of labour. Applying Connell and Pearce’s (2015) definition of gender regimes to men in primary schools, gender regimes structure:

- Who is recruited to do what work (men are overrepresented in leadership positions);
- What social divisions are apparent (men teach the older children);
- How emotional relations are conducted (male teachers as disciplinarians);
- How institutions relate to each other (male teachers as father figures).

These gender regimes, Connell and Pearce note, help develop a recognisable pattern for events, relationships and individual practices within organisations, which mirror the gender order in society. Furthermore, they clarify that the structuring of relations via gender regimes does not mechanically decide how people or groups act. Instead, gender regimes define possibilities for action, and their consequences. For example, in her study that explores a lack of male primary teachers in Early Years settings (0-4 years), Burn (2006) notes that curriculum areas such as Mathematics, Computing and Physical Education, dominate men's specialisms. She suggests that gender regimes may be directing male teachers to choose these areas, socially and culturally recognised as more 'masculine', gaining men more status in school.

Furthermore, Connell (1995) makes it clear that all masculinities are subject to change in relation to situation and context, and this has enabled research to consider how the meaning of masculinity may differ in male primary teachers' relations between boys and girls. As an illustration, Cushman's (2010) study, which looks at the gendered practice of primary teachers, found male primary teachers in both New Zealand and the UK support dominant gendered assumptions that equates masculinity with physicality in their purposely-planned physical activities for teaching boys. Similarly, Roberts-Holmes and Brownhill's (2011) case study of men working in the Early Years sector saw male teachers emphasise hegemonic masculine characteristics that they brought to the setting, including their physicality and sporting expertise. However, their participants were also keen to highlight that within their practice they did not shout or show aggression. Comparing the men's performances of masculinity from these two studies highlights both similarities and differences in behaviour, reflecting variances within the local context the men are working in. Nonetheless, Francis and Skelton (2005) highlight that although there may be greater complexity in gender roles and relationships, for example, men teaching in nurseries and more 'stay at home' fathers, they argue that the clear separation of gendered performances with associated power differences remains unchanged. This identifies Connell's early ideas of men reflecting a 'kind' of masculinity, be it hegemonic or otherwise, as still applicable in analysing gender identities and behaviours.

### 2.3.2 Hegemonic masculinity

The idea of hegemonic masculinities and nonhegemonic masculinities shifts gender analysis from the dualistic notion of masculine and feminine towards pluralised accounts. Connell (1987) questions the homogenous nature of male identities and their associated power and instead identifies alternative expressions of masculinity within and between cultures, as “Hegemonic masculinity is always constructed in relation to various subordinate masculinities as well as in relation to women” (p. 183). Later, she develops this argument by contending that masculinities are separate and conflictual, sustaining unequal relations of power that shape gender identities and continue to create gender inequalities. Importantly for Connell (1995:81), “masculinities are not fixed character types but configurations of practice generated in particular situations in a changing structure of relationships”. Moreover, Connell argues that the positions men hold over other men operate through complicit, subordinate or marginalised relations; as Kimmel further clarifies (1997, cited in Beasley, 2008), “all masculinities are not created equally”.

In recent work, Messerschmitt and Messner (2018) clarify Connell’s initial understanding of masculinities and how men construct hegemonic masculinity. They suggest the key to Connell’s thinking and concept of hegemonic masculinity is the idea that the practice of hegemonic masculinity needs to *legitimate* unequal gender relations and is not just a case of being the most common, celebrated or dominant masculinity practiced by powerful men. Instead, they assert, the achievement of hegemonic masculinities occurs through discursive legitimation, “encouraging all to consent to, unite around, and embody such unequal gender relations”, legitimising unequal relations with femininity and with nonhegemonic masculinity (Ibid: 38). Furthermore, Messerschmitt and Messner recognise the significance of Connell’s nonhegemonic masculinities, as they acknowledge the multiplicity of gender relations and men’s domination of women, enabling social research to explore power relations between men and women and groups of men (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2013).

## 2.4 Complicit masculinities

Men might not be party to hegemonic masculinity, although they may gain from it in terms of positioning and status in some situations. Connell (1995: 79) categorises this 'type' of masculinity as complicit and "constructed in ways that realized the patriarchal dividend, without the tensions or risks of being the frontline troops of patriarchy." Burn and Pratt-Adams (2015) note that this means that male teachers will be positioned and position themselves within recognised hierarchies of male power. Moreover, they assert, "men who follow the approved gender path will expect to gain both approval and rewards" (p. 54). In this section, I consider how pro/feminist researchers use the idea of complicit masculinity to explain male primary teachers' unquestioning acceptance of 'common sense' truths about men teaching young children.

### 2.4.1 Male teachers as docile bodies

Foucault (1977) suggests that bodies are mostly 'docile' in relation to powerful, dominant discourses as they have an unconscious disciplinary power, categorising dominant discourses as 'truths' that are widely accepted without question. Mac an Ghaill and Haywood's (2012) research on 'good' and 'bad' teaching provides a useful example of how gender 'truths' about masculinity and femininity operate within schools. They suggest that traditionally, teaching is seen as involving caring for and nurturing children, and is 'naturally' considered as 'women's work'. In their findings, male teachers placed value on teaching styles that included patience, understanding and care. Moreover, both male and female teachers that they interviewed accepted a shared understanding of what was 'good' teaching, voiced through an idea of "motherly" care. "The effect was that good mothering became an index of good teaching" (cited in Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2013: 94), demonstrating the power and value associated with particular gender discourses that are universally recognised and understood, and overall go uncontested.

Many studies suggest that male primary teachers are 'docile' in Foucauldian terms, as these teachers readily accept common sense assumptions about what it means to be a male primary teacher, constructing performances that reify hegemonic masculinity



(Mills et al., 2004; Francis, 2008a; Martino, 2008; Jackson 2010). Cushman's research (2010) demonstrates how male primary teachers are complicit in accepting and performing hegemonic masculinity. In her comparison of UK, New Zealand and Swedish male primary teachers' views on gender differences in students' behaviour and within teachers' practice, she found that male primary teachers support gendered assumptions that position their behaviour and teaching as different from those of their female colleagues. Moreover, Cushman found that male primary teachers from the UK and New Zealand were complicit in reinforcing gendered expectations about them as men, such as promoting physical activities in the classroom and seeking out other men on the staff to befriend. However, her Swedish participants differed slightly when discussing their practice, as they did not associate behaviours with a particular gender, although they were aware of gendered discourses that operate in school. Cushman explains this finding by proposing that Sweden differs in its active development of the teaching workforce in terms of gender equity rather than adhering to the compensatory masculine politics that shape recruitment of primary teachers in the UK and New Zealand (Cushman, 2010).

Similarly, Moosa and Bhana's (2017) research demonstrates how complicit masculinities operated in five selected schools in South Africa, where deep-rooted gender inequalities were visible within a highly patriarchal society (Morrell, Jewkes, and Lindegger 2012, cited in Moosa and Bhana, 2017). They argue that both male and female primary teachers are sometimes complicit in reproducing men as managers. Their findings suggest that men working in Early Years settings (0-4 years) tend to be aligned to hegemonic masculine practices and positioned as managers, reproducing masculine power within school management structures. Moreover, they assert that the positioning of men as managers counteracts the idea that teaching is 'women's work' and the exclusive domain of female teachers. They found that teachers of both genders were complicit in categorising Early Years as a nurturing female workplace, which in turn reproduced gendered binaries and unequal relations of power. For example, one female teacher in their study positioned men as 'tolerant managers' but not as Early Years teachers, and women as 'unsuitable managers' by suggesting they have a "lower level of tolerance in such positions" (p. 380). The female teacher's views validated the role of

men as managers rather than as classroom teachers, suggesting that she was complicit in reinforcing patriarchal ideas, thus supporting male dominance over women and positioning herself as subordinate. This example highlights the power of dominant gender discourse to position men and women in primary schools differently without question.

#### 2.4.2 The 'natural' role model for boys

The power of gender discourses to render male primary teachers 'docile' is recognisable in the work of Brownhill (2010; 2014), where he examines the perceived qualities and characteristics associated with male role models working with young children. Through questionnaires and interviews, he found that men teaching 0-8 year old children valued being a male role model highly in their work, although there was no consensus among them as to what being a role model actually involved on a day-to-day basis. Furthermore, Brownhill notes, although there is an acceptance from male primary teachers that children, especially boys, need men as role models, there is a lack of clarification as to what they 'naturally' bring that is different to female teachers. Brownhill's findings are mirrored in numerous others (for example, Carrington and McPhee, 2008; Sevier and Ashcraft, 2009; Bullough Jr, 2014), where findings point to an unquestioning acceptance from male primary teachers and primary head teachers of powerful gender discourses that position men as role models, suggesting most men welcome this position in school. Meanwhile, Jones (2007) and Mistry and Sood (2015) recognise that there is no need for male primary teachers to question or reject the identity and positioning as a male role model, as it a valued and powerful 'prized commodity' (Jones 2007: 180) within the primary school.

Exploring the views of primary head teachers from the UK, New Zealand and Sweden, Cushman (2008) found that 85% of male and female head teachers advocated a need for more male role models in primary schools, defining their role as bringing something different from women. These head teachers suggested that the main reason for having male role models was to meet the needs of children from single-parent families, positioning male primary teachers as father figures. While 11 head teachers made the

comment that male teachers should act as 'real men', it is surprising that 8 of the 11 were women. According to Cushman's findings, female head teachers support men conforming to dominant masculinities so that they are less vulnerable to homophobic accusations within the school setting. Moreover, conformity brings them greater opportunities to move into leadership. Cushman concludes that head teachers were valorising dominant gender discourses without question, as only just over half of the head teachers interviewed suggested gender-neutral traits were important in role models, and only 29% placed importance on effective pedagogy. These figures enable Cushman to illustrate how dominant gender discourses are shaping the recruitment choices head teachers are making, noting their willingness to compromise on the teaching quality of their staff in light of employing a man.

Elaborating further, in his review of the literature on 'men teachers as role models', Martino (2008) argues that there are powerful gendered 'truths' about male primary teachers within the school context that idealise the 'male role model' for children as a white, male, heterosexual teacher who displays 'typical' masculine traits. Similarly, Skelton et al. (2007) found that most girls favoured teachers who are nice, kind and generous, and most boys liked teachers who are more authoritarian, knowledgeable and give them interesting work to do. Although the children in Skelton et al.'s study did not explicitly express a preference for a male or female teacher, their comments suggest an adherence towards stereotypical gendered behaviours that conform to Martino's 'ideal' male role model. Skelton (2007:46) and Francis (2008a) agree with Martino's idealised male role model, Skelton noting that male primary teachers who are not white or heterosexual are the 'wrong kind' and do not reflect dominant gender discourses that are fuelling governmental recruitment and retention drives for more male teachers. Francis (2008a) proposes that 'White Male Teachers' who take up masculinised performances find it easier to access discourses which produce power and provide status within the primary school.

Conversely, Bricheno and Thornton's (2007) study challenges the importance of positioning male primary teachers as role models. Their research asked children about their preference for role models and found that boys ranked footballers as more

important role models than teachers, while both boys and girls categorised family members and friends as the most important role models. Similarly, Carrington et al.'s (2008) work contests the common assumption that children need male role models in primary schools. Their study tests the hypothesis that gender matching teachers and pupils produces an increase in positive attitudes amongst pupils. Using quantitative data from the Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) project, they found that female teachers produced positive attitudes amongst both boys and girls, refuting the idea that male teachers, as role models, encourage boys to learn. However, Carrington et al. do acknowledge that their data is limited, as they only used data from teachers and children in Year 6 (10-11 years), excluding views from teachers and pupils in other primary year groups.

Returning to Connell's idea that gender regimes shape gender identities and practice, Skelton (2003) argues that the power of dominant gender discourses shape student primary teachers' pedagogy. Although the majority of Skelton's participants held a view of primary teaching as offering equal opportunities and being a 'gender free' zone, they still referred to the importance of male role models in supporting the academic development of boys. Furthermore, she found that male student teachers of upper primary children (7–11 year-olds) were more likely to be concerned about and supportive of traditional images of masculinity than those men who were training to teach lower primary pupils (3–8-year-olds). Skelton proposes that male primary teachers find comfort and security in 'real men' positions instead of discomfort and insecurity if they are positioned as 'Other', asserting: "one way in which male teachers cope with working in a female profession is to redefine their contribution as different to, and better than, that of female teachers" (p. 206).

### 2.4.3 Men managing children's misbehaviour

Shaping both male and female teachers' identities and practice is the dominant gender discourse that positions men as effective disciplinarians. In light of this, Haase's (2010) study showed how male primary teachers in Australia managed children's misbehaviour through their use of voice. He reports that men used a 'father's voice' when managing

children's behaviour, which he suggests links to patriarchy, creating a social distance from children which "can produce a fear which then becomes commodified as respect" (p. 182). Haase proposes that respect gained through fear, positions male primary teachers as effective disciplinarians holding greater social power within the classroom. Burn (2006:17) agrees, arguing that the power of the 'wait until your father gets home' discourse constructs male primary teachers as authoritarian father figures who are positioned as "frightening or a cruel monster".

In her work exploring teachers' behaviour management strategies and ways in which these are gendered, Jackson (2010) highlights an overlap between 'laddishness' and hegemonic masculinity. Citing Younger and Warrington's (2005) argument that boys commonly adhere to dominant masculine behaviour, Jackson elaborates by suggesting that typical 'laddish' behaviours are: 'having a laugh', liking and playing sport, and labelling academically hard work as 'uncool'. Teachers in Jackson's study categorised 'laddish' behaviours as 'attention-seeking' behaviour, sexualised, linked to competition, and containing homophobic and sexist comments (p. 508). Furthermore, Jackson's teachers categorised a lack of respect for authority as 'laddish'. Jackson found that gender differences in teachers' ideas of what is and what is not acceptable behaviour, and the majority of behaviour management strategies used by both male and female teachers, focused solely on 'handling' laddish boys in order to maintain classroom control and discipline. However, most male teachers in Jackson's study said that 'lads' were a "particular problem" for female teachers and male teachers "understand it better" (p. 511). Furthermore, the men positioned themselves as 'one of the gang', prioritising the idea that what male teachers and the 'lads' had in common was their 'maleness'. Jackson asserts that the implications of male teachers subscribing to hegemonic masculinity in order to accrue social power encourages rather than challenges 'laddishness'. She also notes that this positions 'feminine' behaviour management, with an emphasis on negotiation and reflection, as less effective in managing children's misbehaviour.

Jackson's study highlights dominant gender discourses that position male teachers as more relaxed in how they deal with conflict in schools due to their 'social power' as men

(Haase, 2008). Skelton et al. (2007), Haase (2008) and Jackson (2010) all suggest that there is an expectation that male primary teachers use humour and banter to manage the classroom effectively, putting pressure on male teachers to display dominant masculinity within their practice and shun those who do not. This dominant discourse valorises the use of physical force for controlling children (Chan, 2010), devalues the many different approaches to good behaviour management that are used by effective teachers (Mills et al, 2009), and directly links masculinity with male physicality and power (Haase, 2010). The next section considers the experiences of male teachers who will not or cannot display 'culturally appropriate' forms of masculinity.

## 2.5 Marginalised and subordinate masculinities

Connell (1987) conceptualises an alternative relationship with hegemonic masculinity: subordinate and marginalised masculinities. Although many studies suggest that subordinate and marginalised masculinities are interchangeable, Messerschmitt and Messner (2018: 38) define both separately. They define subordinate masculinities as "lesser than or aberrant from and deviant to hegemonic masculinity", and marginalised masculinities as "trivialised and discriminated against, or both, because of unequal relations, such as class, race, ethnicity and age". Irrespective of which definition is used, there is a universal understanding in research that the display of such masculinities positions individuals and groups as 'outcasts' (Phillips, 2005, cited in Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2013). Many researchers (such as Martino, 2008) argue that male primary teachers partake in hegemonic masculinised performances in order to present themselves as 'real men' and/or father figures carrying out 'men's work', in order to distance themselves from what is thought of as feminine, 'soft' and suspicious. Burn and Pratt-Adams (2015) illustrate the lengths male primary teachers may go to in order to claim to be a 'real man'. They refer to Colin, a male student teacher, who considers himself 'not masculine enough' because he is unable to develop an appropriate 'voice' in the classroom. Colin comes to this conclusion after his Initial Teacher Training Tutor tells him that he needs to lower his voice. Colin then shaves his head the following week. Burn and Pratt-Adams suggest that Colin, unable to lower his voice, decides instead to shave his head to reaffirm his masculinity as something other than subordinate. They also note how another participant, Carl, shows an awareness of a constant 'surveillance'

(Foucault, 1977) by others of his 'appropriateness' as a male teacher, stating: "you're always only one or two steps away from being dragged out of bed by the police", positioning himself as marginalised and 'policed' by himself and others (p. 126). The next section explores the 'policing' of male primary teachers.

### 2.5.1 Male teachers under surveillance

Foucault's work brings theoretical insight into the documented surveillance male primary teachers experience from staff, parents, pupils and the wider public, ensuring that they behave 'appropriately' within the primary school (Foster and Newman, 2005; Jones, 2007; Martino, 2008). Foucault conceptualises the idea of hierarchical observation as a panoptical model of disciplinary power in his book, *Discipline and Punish* (1977), suggesting that it is "the most convenient formula for the constant, immediate and total exercising of power" (Foucault 1996b: 257, cited in Gallagher, 2010). He uses the image of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, a central watchtower surrounded by a ring of cells, to illustrate how a 'conscience-building' tool removes the need for external supervision and "maintains the individual in his subjection" (Foucault, 1977: 187). Within the Panopticon, a single supervisor in the central tower is constantly watching the inmates' activity and behaviour, with the purpose of regulation. Gallagher (2010) notes that this wielding of disciplinary power is relevant for the exploration of this kind of surveillance instilled and reinforced by social institutions, such as schools. Furthermore, Gutting (2005) asserts that surveillance is an important mechanism, for it automates and de-individualises power and suggests a subtle and pervasive control of behaviour through inner transformation, noting in Foucault's disciplines that instituted relations of practice become habitual and embodied. Moreover, Foucault (1977) argues that another feature of modern control is 'normalising judgement', where the judging of individuals against others occurs in relation to the 'norm'. Gutting (2005) notes that norms define 'abnormal' behaviours, constraining and controlling behaviour to fit into what is socially acceptable. Applied to male primary teachers, this idea recognises the omnipresence of power that stems from discourses that stigmatise male primary teachers. This 'silent fear' (Burn and Pratt-Adams, 2015), places male teachers under

surveillance, restricting their behaviour and positioning them as 'abnormal' because they want to work with young children (Smedley, 2007).

Mills et al. (2008) describe how John, a male primary teacher, was positioned 'Other' as he did not conform to normalised constructions of masculinity operating within school. They note how John's 'Othering' occurs through his struggles in the classroom with discipline and teaching, in not being a suitable male role model for boys, and in building emotional relationships with children. Furthermore, Mills et al. note that John's inability to perform the 'ideal' male teacher and conform to the dominant discourses of masculinity leaves him marginalised and feeling inadequate. They suggest that John's only other alternative is to conform to the dominant discourses of masculinity that narrow what it means to be a male primary teacher. Consequently, Mills et al. conclude that John chooses to leave the teaching profession because he is unable to reconcile differences between expectations placed on him as a male teacher and his identity as a primary school teacher.

Similarly, Haase (2010) asserts that male primary teachers feel heteronormative pressure to adhere to normal 'masculine' expectations, for example, liking sport and being disciplinarians, in order to stop them feeling marginalised and counteract potential positioning as being homosexual or a sexual deviant. Haase notes that with such 'significant consequences' it is understandable why male primary teachers comply with hegemonic masculine performances (p. 180). However, he describes the pressure to conform to acceptable 'masculine' performances as not easy, referring to how his participants used 'combative' comments that indicated a 'siege-like' situation to describe their battle against stereotypical representations of a male teacher (p. 181). Similarly, Martino (2008:216) describes the experiences male primary teachers face in order to "navigate their way between an array of hegemonic and subordinate masculinities", recognising the paradoxical situation male primary teachers find themselves in. The men he interviewed felt a compulsion to behave in ways that were in direct opposition to anything feminine whilst undertaking work within a feminised environment. Furthermore, Sargent (2005, cited in Martino, 2008:216) argues that male primary teachers may, "find themselves caught between doing a subordinate form of



masculinity that would make them successful teachers and structural demands for them to do a form of complicit masculinity that is more supportive of a patriarchal gender regime". For Martino, this 'dangerous dilemma' that male teachers' face – aggressor or paedophile – needs greater analysis and understanding than what is on offer currently by educational policy makers and stakeholders. In the next section, I look more closely at how male primary teachers experience the negative gender discourses that position them as 'Other' and their influence on their identities and behaviour.

### 2.5.2 Identity bruising

There is a growing consensus in the literature that suggests that men receive 'knock backs' or a bruising of identity when they begin their career as a primary teacher. Foster and Newman (2005) develop the term 'identity bruising' to describe the experiences of male primary student teachers entering the feminised world of the primary school. They attribute identity bruising to the "common sense beliefs that primary teaching is an unsuitable job for a man" (p. 347) in that "a man teaching young children is not a masculine thing to do" (p. 351). They suggest that identity bruising can take different forms and stem from a number of different people: family, friends, parents and work colleagues. Examples from their research describe men experiencing friends and school parents belittling their career choice – "I am sure you can do better than that" (p. 347), "That's not a good enough job" (p. 348) – and having to deal with child abuse concerns from parents, comments that create feelings of anxiety and low self-worth.

Foster and Newman note that in every one of their case studies, identity bruising came unexpectedly, as many of the men were unused to seeing themselves as positioned as 'Other'. They suggest that this positioning created confusion and conflict between their professional and personal identity in terms of being a man and a primary teacher. These men developed different coping strategies, including compliance and resistance to bruising, in order to construct and reconstruct their identities. In Foster and Newman's study, the more established male primary teachers seemed less concerned with the issues identity bruising had highlighted, and instead felt puzzlement but assurance that these concerns would not last long. Other men that they interviewed made conscious

efforts to avoid any further bruising, such as maintaining a physical distance from the children they taught. This leads Foster and Newman to conclude that in order to avoid and decrease identity bruising, male primary teachers need preparation within training to “see themselves as others may see them” (p. 355), and to begin to understand assumptions that shape gender regimes within primary schooling, helping to develop strong images of themselves as teachers.

A growing number of studies seek to explore the impact of negative gender discourses on male primary teachers. Carrington and Skelton (2003) consider the dilemmas encountered by student teachers in relation to current teacher recruitment policies, reporting that men describe experiencing hostility and suspicion from children, staff and parents about their presence in primary school and about their active recruitment based on their gender. Similarly, Thornton and Bricheno (2006) found that student male primary teachers expressed contradictory feelings of being both ‘centre stage’ and on the ‘periphery’ (p. 100). They note that dominant gender discourses create conflicting expectations and uncertainty, and consequently Initial Teacher Training poses ‘additional challenges’ for them (p. 86). Robert-Holmes and Brownhill (2011) further clarify this situation, noting that men express feelings of being ‘patronised’ as they are valorised as men and not due to their teaching ability. Burn and Pratt-Adams (2015) agree, arguing that male teachers are both advantaged through their ability to take up powerful positions such as role models and father figures, but also disadvantaged by dominant gender discourses, because they are vulnerable to ‘attack’ by resentful female teachers in relation to their promotional chances, and under the constant threat of accusations of child abuse. Similarly, Brownhill’s work with Oates (2017: 665) notes that men teaching in the Early Childhood sector (0-8 years) felt they had certain ‘common sense’ roles imposed on them, such as being a male role model for boys. However, this expected way of behaving felt burdensome for some.

Meanwhile, Warwick et al. (2012) agree with Foster and Newman (2005) that in order to be successful, male primary teachers need to develop a strong image of themselves as teachers. They position these men as a ‘vulnerable group’ (p. 69) because they work within a feminised working environment, asserting that they need other men in the

school acting as 'mirrors' to avoid a position of 'Other'. Developing a 'Men's Club', a place where male student teachers could share experiences in an all-male environment, Warwick et al. offered support for male student teachers who were struggling in their school-based training. The men in their study expressed "intense feelings of isolation" on placement and felt like it was a 'freak show' (p.57). Warwick et al. concluded that, in addition to the provision of 'mirrors' to support their construction of themselves as teachers, men need time and space to consider any difficulties they may encounter.

Braun (2012) brings a different perspective, applying Colley's (2006) vocational habitus to student teachers "ideal teacher narratives" (p. 231). Through exploring what constitutes the vocational culture of teaching and how individual student teachers interpret care and authority, she argues that student teachers need to orientate themselves within the school culture in order to become "the right person for the job" (p. 232). Braun asserts that student teachers need to develop the correct vocational habitus that is "embodied, felt and enacted as a fundamental part of one's personal and occupational identity" (p. 235). Her research found that student teacher responses reflected 'common-sense' ideas of what an ideal teacher should be like, such as being inspirational and effective, evoking sentiments of fairness, strictness and dedication. She argues that this image of a teacher develops from external discourses, whose contradictory nature can be problematic for student teachers as endless movement back and forth between discourses develops confusion and anxiety over whether they 'fit'. For example, where some student teachers struggle with authority, conflicting with their 'vocational habitus' of being caring and child-centred. Braun notes that conflict was more noticeable in site-specific contexts where school environments can create institutional cultures that clash with student teacher habitus and the "kind of teacher [they] want to be" (p. 240). She argues that at an individual level, subject positions clash with institutional and professional demands, and dominant gender discourses leave student teachers feeling they have embodied the 'wrong' type of masculinity or femininity. However, Braun found those student teachers who were able to distance themselves from the caring discourses of teaching associated with femininity and 'women's work' were able to be more successful in the classroom.

There has been an increased interest amongst educational researchers in the role of emotions in teaching and the construction of teacher identities, with the recognition that there is a gender difference in the perception and expression of emotions amongst teachers. Researching NQTs' emotional reactions to practice, Demetriou et al. (2009) claim that a holistic approach to teaching, incorporating emotional engagement in practice, is important for both male and female teachers. Their research found gender differences in emotional connections to teaching, where male NQTs were more negative towards teaching as a career, voicing that they felt 'trapped' and controlled by the education system. Demetriou et al. found that female NQTs were better at distancing themselves from blame if things did not go to plan in the classroom, and were more willing to ask for help and be reflective than male NQTs. Their findings align with Brownhill's (2014) research that explores the perceived qualities associated with male role models, and his argument that male primary teachers may perceive their role as being an objective rather than an emotive one and consequently may struggle to understand a practice that places emphasis on their emotional labour and feelings.

Zembylas (2003) stresses the importance of emotions in the understanding of the 'teacher self' in relation to power and agency. His poststructuralist perspective on emotions and teacher identity enables him to argue "Teacher identity is constantly becoming in a context embedded in power relations, ideology, and culture" (p. 213). He asserts that teacher identities are dependent upon power and agency and that teachers' emotions can provide sites of agency in terms of resistance and self-transformation. While he places emphasis on the discursive construction of teacher identity, he notes that this does not preclude the possibility of self-transformation; instead, he asserts that a consideration of emotion opens possibilities for the self-identification of teachers and provides spaces for change. He suggests that teachers can distance themselves from being 'normalised' and affect self-identification through:

Developing an awareness of their emotional responses as one of their many ways of knowing, and using the power of emotion as a basis of collective and individual social resistance, teachers can sort their experiences, their anxieties, their fears, their excitements and learn how to use them in empowering ways (p. 230).

Zembylas asserts that creating emotional and professional bonding between teachers develops a space for agency to resist dominant teacher identities, including those associated with dominant gender discourse. The power of emotion enables them to redefine themselves through association with alternative discursive practice. Although much educational research recognises that male primary teachers may struggle with their positioning amongst the opposing discourses that operate within the primary school, there is a growing consensus in the field that successful male primary teachers are able to negotiate these competing gender discourses through personal agency. The next section explores this idea further.

## 2.6 Personal agency

Some studies have found that men who manipulate competing gender discourses can become successful primary teachers. Smedley (1998; 2007) asserts that although men experience marginality when entering primary teaching, this is not fixed or total because dominant gender discourses position feminisation, not masculinity, as undesirable. She notes that dominant gender discourses operating within primary schools make gender visible for men, enabling them to operate as 'gender chameleons' by manipulating and producing a 'superficial' set of behaviours (1998: 233) through personal agency. Moreover, Smedley asserts that male primary teachers who employ personal agency to access both male and female behaviours are able to construct multiple identities that is somewhere 'in-between' masculine and feminine. However, she warns that the androgynous teacher does little to stop gender being an issue for those entering primary teaching, as stereotypical traits will still be valued and responded to differently by both men and women.

Jones's (2007) research continues Smedley's acknowledgement of the complex dynamics of gender and the resistance or compliance male teachers may exert in relation to gender discourses that operate within the primary school. Her work notes how men teaching young children are aware of the conflicting identities that gender discourses construct for them, including the 'right kind' of man that female teachers construct. Jones recognises the conflictual multiple identities available to male teachers,

such as role models, potential managers, 'not real men', and sexual perverts, which position them as "superheroes or demons" (p. 186). Furthermore, she notes that the men she interviewed were 'acutely aware' of these discursive terms, creating feelings of self-consciousness and uncertainty about who they should be within the school environment. She reports that female teachers also position men in these discursive positions, aligned with or subordinate to, hegemonic masculinity, creating a 'pick and mix' of masculinities to construct their "ideal male teacher" (p. 191). She notes that female teachers would like men to take on a variety of roles, fusing masculine and feminine behaviours, in order to be "the right kind of man" (p. 188). Thus, Jones suggests a "paradoxical and hyphenated" identity for male teachers, that she terms 'Millennium Man', constructed by partial discourses of hegemonic masculinity combined with 'progressive' discourses that construct men as sensitive and caring (p. 191). This 'right kind' of Millennium Man is both 'macho' and sensitive, an 'action man' in tune with his emotions.

Jones (2007) acknowledges that positioning of both male and female teachers occurs within certain discursive constraints where there is some element of choice in establishing identity but "it appears we cannot always become who we want to be" (p. 191). Her stance reflects Foucault's (1984) argument of limited agency, where individuals and groups are able to oppose dominant discourses through claiming alternative discourses or 'truths' that are available in the social world. Jones agrees, noting a limit to personal agency of male teachers, as their positioning by gender discourses happens in particular ways of which they have very little control. Moreover, she notes that the initial years within primary teaching may be difficult for men as they set about establishing who they are amongst the competing and contrasting discourses that operate there; however, she argues that this is short-lived due to relations of power. Jones views power as both positive and negative, constraining or enabling male teachers at different times and in different contexts to construct identities that are 'winners' (head teachers) or 'losers' (high risk). Nevertheless, she concludes by noting that men in primary teaching are able to partake in Connell's (2002) 'patriarchal dividend', cutting across gendered hierarchies to become 'winners' whereas "female teachers cannot travel with the same gains and become the 'losers'" (p. 192). Jones'

work supports Connell and Pearse's (2015) idea that individuals are 'active' participants in gender regimes in order to "seek pleasure, experience and transformation" (p. 39), in contrast with the stance that male primary teachers are completely 'docile' in their acceptance of discursive identities and positioning.

Similarly, Warin (2017:9) argues that men working in a nursery setting (0-4 years) see themselves as "both fatherly and motherly", having multiple roles some of the time. She notes that these men become a 'chameleon-like' figure, changing according to the child's lead, emphasising effective Early Years pedagogical practice. Warin likens the men's openness and interchangeability of gender roles to a 'gender flexible' approach, where gender is a 'free-floating artifice' (Butler, 2004, cited in Warin, 2017). However, she notes that although a gender flexible approach provides male teachers with more 'freedom' to challenge and disrupt hegemonic masculinities, there is still some inconsistency in practice. She reports how the men working at the nursery still conformed to gender stereotypical views, with a general acceptance from both male and female teachers of men's position in the setting, which helped to replicate traditional familial gender patterns. She argues that having a gender balance in the teaching workforce does not always equate to gender flexibility. Instead, developing a gender balance in teaching staff can stress gender differences and "bolster the reproduction of traditional gender roles and stereotypes", with roles and identities of 'male' and 'teacher' in conflict with each other (p. 14). Warin concludes with a warning that a 'gender flexible' approach calls for teachers to become more aware of the subtle and invisible ways in which traditional gender norms persist within school structures and relations between teachers and children.

In conclusion, much educational research recognises that male primary teachers have agency to reposition themselves discursively in schools in order to be successful; however, this research still employs the concept of multiple masculinities which places emphasis firmly on the construction of different 'types' of male teachers. I now turn to focus on how some gender theorists recognise masculinity and femininity differently in order to capture the diversity of gender identities.

## 2.7 Recognising diversity within gender identities

### 2.7.1 Redefining hegemonic masculinity and nonhegemonic masculinities

Connell's (1987, 1995) earlier conceptualisation of masculinities is argued to be deterministic and reductive, creating confusion with dominant masculinities that do not legitimate the power of men (Connell and Messerschmitt, 2005; Beasley 2008). Moreover, Beasley asserts that a 'slippage' has occurred in the use of hegemonic masculinity in research, arguing that it has moved from a focus on legitimising patriarchy to meaning a dominant or common form of masculinity, to just meaning 'groups of men'. However, in her review of her initial conceptualisation, Connell herself notes that it is "framed within a heteronormative concept of gender that essentialises male-female difference and ignores difference and exclusion within gender categories" (Connell and Messerschmitt, 2005:836).

Moreover, Connell in her work with Messerschmitt, seek to rectify earlier definitions of hegemonic masculinity through clarification of the diverse nature of masculinities, noting:

Masculinity is not a fixed entity embedded in the body or personality traits of individuals. Masculinities are configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action and, therefore, can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting (Ibid: 836).

Through this clarification, Connell and Messerschmitt (2005) rework the definition:

Hegemonic masculinities are formed through an unequal and hierarchical relationship between masculinities and femininities (even though femininities may be constructed in and through male bodies); and that through this relationship, hegemonic masculinities circulate a legitimating justification for gender inequality (p. 832).

Recently, Messerschmitt and Messner (2018) have elucidated the definition further, noting how it retains the importance of gender relations and legitimisation of hegemony through patriarchy but brings a new consideration of the intersectionality of gender, the embodiment of masculinity, both hegemonic and nonhegemonic and how masculinities are subject to challenge and change. In summary, they claim hegemonic masculinities



may or may not be socially celebrated or common but will always legitimise unequal gender relations.

### 2.7.2 Gender performances

Even with the multiple modifications over the last 30 years, Connell's ideas about masculinity are still open to critique from pro/feminist researchers. Paechter (2006) argues that as a concept, hegemonic masculinity does not account for the variation in male identities and behaviours. Francis (2008b) agrees, asserting that Connell's theory of gender identities still positions gender within the sexed physical body, overemphasising gender-traditional behaviour and reifying gender differences. Similarly, Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (2013) argue that research needs to understand the experiences of men, their feelings, identifications and embodiments in a way that does not rely on dominant discourses of masculinity.

Challenging the assumed link between sex and gender, some pro/feminist researchers apply Judith Butler's (1990) poststructuralist lens that views both sex and gender as socially constructed via binary gender discourses and separate from body (Francis, 2008b; Haase, 2010; Warin, 2017). Butler theorises masculinities and femininities as socially constructed performances recognised and accepted through acting out of various gender identities rather than originating 'naturally' from a gendered body. According to Butler, men and boys do not perform a 'type' of masculinity, hegemonic, subordinate or otherwise, instead they 'do gender', where identities are assigned through the chosen performance (Paechter, 2006). Halberstam (1998) applies Butler's work in his own concept of 'female masculinity', where he argues that masculinity is a socially constructed identity performance and consequently separate from men: "masculinity must not and cannot and should not reduce down to the male body and its effects" (Halberstam, 1998:2). Moreover, he argues that people can do masculinity or femininity, regardless of their sex, as gender identities are wholly dependent on the outward performance. His conceptualisation moves beyond multiple masculinities, opening up gender categories, "uncoupling *what men do* from *what men are*" (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2013: 91, authors' italics).

However, Paechter (2006) and Francis (2008b) highlight problems in Butler's work, noting how it is still unable to disrupt gender performances, aligning femininities with women and girls or masculinities with men and boys. Francis and Paechter (2015) also assert that Butler's theorisation still connects sex with gender, reinforcing gender dualities. They acknowledge Halberstam's ability to apply Butler's ideas within the empirical, but argue there is still too much focus in his work on the spectator attributing gender identities and a lack of individual agency. However, Paechter (2006) seeks to rectify this by placing importance on the individual's understanding of self as well as the response gained from the spectators of gender identity performances. She argues that men can be 'predominantly' masculine or feminine or somewhere in between, but importance is placed on both the attribution of gender identity (how masculine/feminine someone is) and whether they are a man or woman. Furthermore, the subsequent term (man/woman) is fixed, whereas the latter (our maleness/femaleness) varies between cultures. Consequently, she asserts that the performance of the 'gendered self' is not just to others but also to oneself, enabling the individual to claim and attribute gender identities through agentic means. However, Paechter recognises restrictions in identity construction, arguing that gender identities are more or less defined and constant because of how they conform to our bodies and how we see ourselves within that body. Nevertheless, her work brings further understanding to the idea of male primary teachers performing a range of gender identities, although commenting on Paechter's conceptualisation, Francis (2008b: 215) argues there is insufficient recognition of the "power of 'the reader' to assign gender", as a discursive activity. However, Francis does agree with the idea that it is impossible to isolate the influence of embodied subjectivities from discursive constructions of gender.

Francis (2008b) applies Bakhtin's (1981) understanding of language and concepts of monoglossia and heteroglossia as analytical tools for the empirical study of gender identities. She argues that gender performance and its construction can reflect both monoglossia and heteroglossia, although monoglossic (dominant) accounts of gender dominate within institutions such as schools. She found in her case study research

(Francis, 2008a) that male primary teachers can produce heteroglossically diverse gender performances, demonstrating the potential to challenge and disrupt male teachers' monoglossic gender identities. She identifies some male primary teachers as able to perform 'male femininity' through emotive responses to the boys they teach, and conduct self-deprecating identity performances, commonly understood as feminine. However, the male primary teachers she interviewed also effectively drew on monoglossic gender discourses, positioning themselves with power evoked from their masculine performances of the tough, rational teacher. Hence, Francis concludes that gender is not always embodied; men can perform femininity, but embodiment can facilitate and constrain performances of particular discourses in order to position and reposition. I return to Francis's work in more depth in Chapter 3 where I outline my theoretical position, drawing on her conceptualisation of gender monoglossia and gender heteroglossia.

## 2.8 Conclusion: the critique of the literature

Although the majority of recent research relating to male primary teachers' experiences in schools recognises a multiplicity within the construction of identity, there is a general acceptance that discursively produced identities reduce gender identities of male primary teachers to familiar constructions of dominant gender stereotypes and behaviours. Both Smedley (2007) and Jones (2007) note the difficulties that male teachers have in escaping constraints that position them through discourses and practices, rendering male teachers 'docile' to the disciplinary power of discourse (Foucault, 1977). Furthermore, as Francis (2008b) notes, much gender theorisation tends to focus on gender-traditional behaviour of men and women, and consequently fixes gender identities within binarised choices of either 'doing masculinity' or 'doing femininity' (p. 213 ). Furthermore, she argues that research fails to identify how monoglossia masks gender heteroglossia, recording instead monoglossic, dualistic masculine performances and omitting to acknowledge the individual agency of people and how this may bring alternative ideas for who they would like to be.

Many studies consider how the cultural, social and global shape gender identities of male primary teachers; understandably, there is an overriding concern amongst

pro/feminist researchers with the unequal relations between men and women, but this causes studies to consider male primary teachers as an identifiable group, separate and in contrast to female teachers. Consequently, because they place less importance on local relations, our understanding of how gender discourses play out daily for male primary teachers is limited. Many studies in this review are not longitudinal, focusing on either student teachers, Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT), or established teachers, but there is a danger that such research omits to consider how male primary teachers construct and perform their identities over a longer period, from being a student teacher, an NQT and then a more experienced teacher. There is also a tendency in previous research to gather data from male primary student teachers who have chosen the most common one-year postgraduate route into primary teaching. However, this overlooks men who have chosen an undergraduate route into primary teaching, thus spending at least three years in their development as a teacher.

My literature review has demonstrated that being and becoming a male primary teacher is a complex process. Current research has shown that as beginning teachers, they are subject to dominant gender discourses that positions them as “The lonely ‘Romeo’ to the resident ‘Hitler’” (Cushman, 2005: 235). However, they retain some agency to reposition themselves discursively in schools in order to be successful, although these identity productions and performances still adhere to recognisable ‘types’ of male teachers. With this analysis in mind, I now ask the following questions:

- What views do early career male primary teachers have of themselves and the job they have chosen?
- How do early career male primary teachers talk about gender discourses in their accounts of being a teacher? What role do these gender discourses play?
- How do early career male primary teachers’ ideas of the teacher they want to be develop over time?

## 3. Theoretical Framework

### 3.1 Introduction

The literature reviewed in the previous chapter suggests male primary teachers are positioned by gender discourses as both 'winners' and 'losers' (Jones, 2007), proposing they are both at once powerful figures and objects of suspicion because they are men. Additionally, the research reviewed in Chapter 2 proposes that they are able to apply some personal agency in order to position themselves amongst the discursive positions available within the primary school and develop a 'gender flexible' approach within their practice (Warin, 2017). However, it seems as if male primary teachers have very little say in how they are positioned and the role they take on in school, as dominant gender discourses limit their choice of 'ways to be'.

My study explored how a group of men individually engage in the activity of being a primary teacher over a number of years. This led me to consider how the prevailing gender discourses around being and becoming a male primary teacher influenced not only their daily roles and practice, but also their identities, as a man and a teacher. I also wanted to consider if, as the literature suggests, my participants were limited in their responses to the various gender discourses and associated positioning they experience.

Therefore, I chose to view my participants' accounts of daily practice through a theoretical lens that supported the exploration of their responses to discursive positioning and allowed me to analyse what opportunities for professional and personal agency were available for them. Both Becky Francis's (2008b; 2010; 2012) work around gender monoglossia and heteroglossia and Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain's (1998) theory of Figured Worlds bring focus to identity and agency and notably, the positioning of individuals within local contexts. Combining both theoretical ideas recognises that people do have some agency in their choice and capacity to resist the positions that are available, albeit with some limitations.

In this chapter, I first outline Francis's understanding of 'gender heteroglossia', which interrogates the usefulness of the current discursive approach to gender through an application of Bakhtin's (1981; 1986) concepts of dialogism and heteroglossia. In the

next section, I explore the use of these concepts in Holland et al.'s (1998) theory of Figured Worlds. The final section operationalises my theoretical framework, helping to refine my research questions.

## 3.2 Gender heteroglossia: An alternative method of gender analysis

Francis (2008b; 2010; 2012) attempts to address the challenge of capturing the diversity of gender identities within an analytical framework, moving beyond a purely discursive analysis of gender identities found within many of the studies reviewed in Chapter 2. Drawing on Bakhtin's (1981) study of language, she offers a new perspective in the reading of gender, suggesting that the conception of gender and its performance is both 'monoglossic' and 'heteroglossic'. Francis's work directs attention to the notion that although gender monoglossia appears to be holistic, there is heteroglossic diversity at work in all gender performances, deconstructing the monoglossic, binary account of sex/gender. In this sense, Francis's use of gender heteroglossia highlights how people articulate and maintain gender monoglossia, the most dominant production of masculinity and femininity, while at the same time acknowledging that omnipresent heteroglossic diversity has potential to disrupt and deconstruct these dominant gender productions at a local level. Additionally, her application of Bakhtin's (1981) concept of dialogism enables Francis to argue for a mutual construction of gender identities and performances, bringing a theoretical focus to the spectator, the subject, and the diverse local gender discourses that shape the individual gender performance and its reading.

### 3.2.1 Monoglossia and heteroglossia

Francis (2008b, 2010, 2012) offers an alternative analytical frame that seeks to address the limitations of the idea of an exclusively discursive production of gender identities. Her Bakhtinian analyses can

...recognise the ways in which individual productions of gender are shot through with contradiction, and incorporate both aspects of performance generally understood as 'masculine' and 'feminine'; and further, how these productions of gender are performed within local socio-economic

environments and to specific audiences, to signify in particular ways within a binarised, 'monoglossic' gender system (2012:3).

Francis (2010, 2012) identifies that gender identities and performances, when analysed at a local level, may be contradictory and inconsistent, although monoglossic accounts of masculinity and femininity has signifying power in spite of gender heteroglossia. Bakhtin (1981) understands 'monoglossia' as the dominant form of language stemming from powerful social groupings, accepted as a single voice. In this sense, "monoglossia centralises particular socio-cultural expressions in an attempt to refine and remove alternative expressions in order to achieve complete hegemony for the monoglossic account" (Francis and Paechter, 2015: 788). To clarify, Francis (2008b) provides an example of 'monoglossia' as uncontended gendered accounts of masculinity, such as "competitive", "strong" and "aggressive". These are similar to Foucault's 'regime of truths': hegemonic 'truths' that go unchallenged.

However, Francis (2008b: 219) notes the importance within Bakhtin's (1981) concept that language may appear uncontested, providing a monological worldview as a single 'truth', but this view is "shot-through with complexity, and may be interpreted differently depending on the discursive environment". This situates heteroglossia within the local. For Bakhtin, language is filled with the intentions of others and never neutral: it represents the views and interests of others in the world and supports the construction of power relations. In this sense, Francis (2008b: 219) argues that straightforward productions of gender that seem stable, such as terms associated with masculinity, may under closer inspection be "fluid and shifting", suggesting there are contradictions, diversity and resistance within individual gender production and how performances of gender are 'read' by others.

### 3.2.2 Gender as an utterance

An explanation of Bakhtin's 'verbal-ideological world' brings further understanding to the realities of gender heteroglossia. Bakhtin argues that language, as a social construct, grounds our very existence in dialogue, stating:

The single adequate form for verbally expressing authentic human life is the open-ended dialogue. Life by its very nature is dialogic. To live means

to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth. In this dialogue, a person participates wholly and throughout his whole life: with his eye, lips, hands, soul, spirit, with his whole body and deeds. He invests his entire self in discourse, and this discourse enters into the dialogic fabric of human life, into the world symposium (Bakhtin 1984, p 293).

Furthermore, Bakhtin sees meaning about ourselves, the world and our place within it, formed between the author (speaker) and the reader (listener), each one drenched in historical and sociocultural understanding. The derivation of any meaning from this mutual relationship implies that we are permanently involved in the act of being addressed by, and responding to, others: what Bakhtin calls 'addressivity', as within these responses and utterances from both parties is an awareness of their past use. In this sense, Bakhtin proposes that our words have a 'taste' of the context(s) in which they have lived and are always "shot through with intentions and accents" of former speakers (Ibid, p.293-294).

Moreover, Bakhtin (1981) notes that the dialogic nature of utterances means that language can appear initially to be monoglossic, saturated with both collective and specific meaning, limited through dialects of former speakers (p. 293). However, Bakhtin (1986: 91) argues that language is recognisable as a 'heteroglot', made up of stratified 'speech genres', reproducing and reflecting the "echoes and reverberations of other utterances". In this sense, every utterance produces a responsive interaction between the self and other. Bakhtin continues by noting that speech genres "knit [words] together with specific points of view, specific approaches, forms of thinking, nuances and accents characteristic of the given genre" (1981: 298). These genres interweave with 'professional' categories of words, such as the language of the doctor, teacher, and lawyer. Additionally, each utterance shapes itself in active response to the receiver whilst also already moulded in 'answer' to both historical and future utterances (Bakhtin et al., 1994: 5). From Bakhtin's point of view, these 'speech genres' are monoglossic in nature, connecting language to cultural and socio-political forces. He believes that these reproductive centripetal forces are in constant struggle to unite against the heteroglossia of language and impose a 'monologic' dominant meaning or 'unitary language'.



The existence of a 'common unitary language' represents for Bakhtin (1981: 271) "a world view...concrete opinion, insuring a *maximum* of mutual understanding in all spheres of ideological life" (author's italics). Hence, the collective nature of this language is important in creating this all-encompassing view of the social world. Furthermore, Bakhtin (1981) considers unitary language as an expression of the centripetal forces of everyday linguistic life, as it consists of "specific points of view on the world, forms for conceptualizing the world in words, specific world views, each characterized by its own objects, meanings and values" (p. 291-292). Usefully, Francis considers the prevailing model of gender as a 'world view' in Bakhtin's terms and within world views there are always "authoritative utterances that set the tone" (Bakhtin, 1986:88-89), such as banter as a masculine performance (Hasse, 2008). The repetition, acceptance and reiteration of these dominant utterances demonstrate centripetal forces at work – unifying verbal and ideological thought – albeit superficially in the presence of heteroglossia.

### 3.2.3 The monoglossic gender matrix

The key to Bakhtin's dialogism is that the interpretation of thought is dialogic, happening within every social encounter, both individual and collective. Dialogism emerges as "a product and an expression of the struggle between heteroglot and monologic voices" (Hunt, 2010: 38). As Bakhtin (1984:100) clarifies:

Stratification and heteroglossia widen and deepen as long as language is alive and developing ... Every concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear. The processes of centralisation and decentralisation, of unification and disunification, intersect in the utterance.

Furthermore, Bakhtin (1981) argues that the existence of contradictions within the 'languages' of heteroglossia represent the different possibilities of reading 'utterances' formed from past, present and future usages, from differing 'epochs of the past', and from different social groups of the present. He argues that this demonstrates that language can never be fixed or static as it is dependent on past, present and future contexts, both the material and the social. In this sense, these heteroglot languages all intersect in a number of ways, creating "new socially typifying 'languages'" (Bakhtin,

1981:291). For Bakhtin (1981), these new languages are what makes up ‘speech genres’, and this all happens within the consciousness of humans, where the social and historical become lived worlds of ‘social heteroglossia’ and where languages, struggling and evolving, “live a real life” (p. 292). In summary, the languages of heteroglossia, appropriated by people through agentic means, are constantly in the process of forming and reforming in order to create new social languages.

Returning to Francis (2008b, 2010, 2012) and ‘gender heteroglossia’, she argues that Bakhtin’s ideas of dialogism, heteroglossia and monoglossia can contribute to gender analysis as they acknowledge the power that monoglossic accounts have as centripetal forces: unifying and prioritising the language of socially dominant ideologies. Applying Bakhtin’s ideas, Francis argues that gender binaries are a monoglossic account of a fixed ‘truth’ but that a Bakhtinian lens “will reveal the furious scramble of heteroglossia continuously pulsating beneath the monoglossic façade” (Francis, 2012:5).

Furthermore, Francis (2012:6) terms the gender binary system – the general understanding of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ – as the “monoglossic gender matrix”. She clarifies this conception through noting:

Our cultural understanding of these various concepts and attributes featured in the matrix as masculine and feminine is deeply embedded via a multi-layered history of the discursive construction of gender, and consumption of the cultural artefacts of this history (p.6).

According to Francis, the embedding of the ‘monoglossic gender matrix’ in cultural artefacts becomes the ‘go-to’ representation of gender in action through repetition and reification. These powerful and totalitarian hegemonic gender ‘truths’ have been posited by feminist theorists as ‘impossible’ to escape (Butler, 2004) but, as Francis asserts, Bakhtin’s centrifugal forces of heteroglossia are able to alter and deconstruct monoglossia.

### 3.2.4 Gender heteroglossia

Francis notes that an unusual aspect of the monoglossic account of gender is its ability to present itself holistically, masking evident gender heteroglossia. Furthermore, she argues that even when gender heteroglossia presents itself clearly within gender

performances; the overall impression of 'monoglossic gender stability' is the preferred response of individuals and groups. Moreover, Francis asserts that although productions of gender may be diverse in relation to the individual performance and their readings, they still conform to the monoglossic account of gender. Francis (2012) terms these monoglossic productions of gender in different spaces as 'gender genres', drawing on Bakhtin's concept of 'speech genres'. Gender genres enable an understanding of how individualised and diverse performances of gender are appropriated meaning within the monoglossic 'whole' which serves to stem potentially disruptive heteroglossic productions.

Francis (2012) argues that gender heteroglossia shifts the idea of the 'truth' in relation to 'gender norms' and gender categorisation adding further explanation to the contradictions that occur within dominant discursive practices. She argues that variances within gender performances are a model of heteroglossia in action, although turning again to Bakhtin, she explains that monoglossic gender accounts withstand as contradictory accounts of gender are considered parodies of the 'unitary language' and are "just as sanctioned by tradition and just as canonized as their elevated models" (Bakhtin, 1981:53). The dominant gender discourses that position male primary teachers as 'Other' illustrate this point, where men who display feminine traits as teachers are seen as weak and ineffectual (Mills et al. 2008) and those who choose to teach younger children are positioned as either homosexual or paedophiles (Martino, 2008). Francis maintains that these variant gender productions indicate that heteroglossia has a part to play within the binary gender model and beyond.

As noted in Chapter 2, many studies recognise that individuals and groups who perform contradictory gender productions may be rendered 'Other' as they do not 'fit' with the monoglossic gender matrix. Francis (2012: 8) elaborates by noting that disruption by heteroglossia weakens the monoglossic gender binary and those whose gender performances defy gender binaries are "punitively policed and punished for their Otherness". The 'policing' of men wanting to teach young children reflects the discipline and surveillance of those who are categorised 'Other' by the monoglossic gender matrix. However, Francis applies Bakhtin's notion of 'addressivity' to gender production, seeing the meaning of gender and its performance as a mutual process between the self and

others and bringing understanding to how individuals are able to disrupt the monoglossic gender matrix. Furthermore, Francis argues that the attribution of gender needs to consider both the roles of the performer and the observer and the gender discourses that position and inform the individual gender performance and its reading. She asserts that the reading of gender as an 'utterance' occurs through the speaker's anticipation of the listener's response to the utterance based on a myriad of historical and sociocultural meanings and the positioning of both the speaker and listener within this dialogue.

Francis clarifies Bakhtin's addressivity further by noting that understanding can only happen through responses – "one is impossible without the other" (Bakhtin, 1981:282) – as we are always in the position of 'being addressed' and answering. As such, it is the local context, alongside the structural, that is addressed in responses. In relation to gender, Francis (2012) argues that the observer has the power to legitimise the authenticity of the gender identity, performed through the reading of gendered signs and symbols used in the performance. Local meanings, including the 'sexed' body and other social structures, informs the reading of gender performances and consequently the assigning of gender identities.

### 3.2.5 Applying gender heteroglossia

Importantly for Francis, those gender performances that on the surface appear binarised as masculine or feminine, are reconstructed and reproduced as they take place within a landscape of heteroglossia and can be read differently. Her application of Bakhtin challenges the discursive reading of gender that permeates the literature in Chapter 2 and instead is able to acknowledge both the importance of social structures and the body in the production of gender without reducing the analysis to gender binaries. Moreover, Francis (2010) notes that gender heteroglossia, as it occurs in all gender productions, is a constant part of everyday life and facilitates understanding of all performances of gender. Additionally, she asserts that dominant productions of gender suggest a totality within day-to-day practices that are constantly changing and oppositional. However, even clearly binarised productions of masculinity and femininity are open to heteroglossic resigning in light of the local discursive environment. In

conclusion, Francis (2012) argues that a Bakhtinian analysis of gender moves away from reducing gender categorisation aligned to the sexed body. Nevertheless, she notes that this does not mean ignoring the influence of the material on the construction of gender identities. Instead, through analyses of gender monoglossia and gender heteroglossia, research can acknowledge both the dominant corporal productions of gender and the part heteroglossia plays within these productions. Furthermore, she suggests that this enables research to explore those subjectivities that do not 'fit' the monoglossic account perpetuated by socially dominant groups, such as male primary teachers who do not adhere to hegemonic masculine performances.

### 3.3 Identity and agency

Whereas Francis (2008; 2010; 2012) writes with reference to how people come to understand gender identities and performances through a dialogic process between the social and embodied self, Holland et al.'s (1998) work adds detail to how dialogism and addressivity provides agency for people to self-identify differently in culturally and discursively constrained environments. Hence, the focus for my work, and for Holland et al., is the 'situatedness' of identity within 'collectively formed' practice, or 'Figured worlds'. These imaginary, collective recognised worlds provide the space for people to improvise with the discourses that Foucault suggests determine us. Holland et al. argue that through mediation of cultural signs and symbols within figured worlds, humans can exert some agency to rethink themselves. They note that this does not happen overnight but is a slow, difficult and messy process where diverse elements interlink in the construction of identity. They thus offer a complementary theoretical tool that affords deeper understanding of discourse, gender, positioning and power, enabling new insights into how men teaching in primary schools make sense of themselves and their environment on a day-to-day basis.

#### 3.3.1 The Self-in-Practice

Identities are 'grounded' within specific 'frames of social life' (Holland et al. 1998:7) or 'Figured Worlds'. Figured worlds are imaginary, collectively recognised contexts where identities develop and reform over time. Holland et al. assert that in these worlds 'big

structures', such as race and gender, need to be considered alongside the local in order to make sense of self. Importantly, they acknowledge that as agentic beings we are able to 'self-author' and create or enact alternative identities between the 'interstices' of these grand structures, what they call the 'self-in-practice' (p. 278). Holland et al. accept the importance of discourse in identity development and enactment but consider this alongside 'generativity', that is, how, through collective understanding and social relationships occurring on a day-to-day basis, individuals and groups of people have power to imagine themselves otherwise within these 'interstices'. This immediately stands the framework apart from others in directing focus to agency within identity production and performance.

Holland et al. situate 'identity' within three spheres, the social, individual and historical, arguing that one cannot be understood without consideration of the others as they are all interconnected. They propose that people bring with them a 'history-in-person' (p. 46), complicated perspectives of self, made up of recognised identities, subject positions and multiple environments. Holland et al. acknowledge that discourse can restrict identity production and performances but argue our history-in-person provides opportunities for agency. The history-in-person, they consider as, "sediment from past experiences upon which one improvises, using the cultural resources available, in response to the subject positions afforded to one in the present" (p. 18). Importantly, humans bring their history to the moment, creating an interaction between past subject positions and identities and circumstances of the present. For Holland et al., one's history-in-person can afford the potential for self-control and agency through a collision of past and present perspectives which, when combined, create new "products of the moment" (p. 46), new cultural resources. The mediation of these can alter the self and others in the present and future.

Furthermore, Holland et al. acknowledge, as Francis does, that identity construction mediates between the social and the embodied self in the self-in-practice. They add depth and detail to identity production, arguing that self-identification happens at the edges of the structural and the local, between inner speaking and embodied historical and present practices. For Holland et al. the self-in-practice, "'authors' or 'orchestrates' the products of these sites of self" – the person, cultural resource and social position –

‘co-developed’ within a historical landscape (p. 32). The mediation that occurs between the social and embodied brings shape to the developing self-in-practice. Holland et al. are concerned with the space in-between the social and embodied self: what they call the ‘not space’ (p. 14). They argue that self-identification occurs in this fluid environment – within the self-in-practice – and is always in the process of becoming. These spaces of development occur between historically formed inner discourses and bodily practice, and present discourses and practices that people encounter. The fluid self-in-practice is ‘orchestrated’ through identifying the self within these spaces, making sense of one’s own and others’ positioning. It is a space to imagine or interpret action, and a space to ‘author’ identities of both the self and others. All this takes place within what Holland et al. call ‘Figured worlds’.

### 3.3.2 Figured Worlds

Holland et al.’s ‘Figured worlds’ tell us more about the on-the-ground experiences that occur within different worlds, exploring the collective understanding of familiar generic figures and their acts, situated within particular social structures. Their focus encompasses both culture and subject positioning simultaneously as they assert that:

Identities form in these figured worlds through the day-to-day activities undertaken in their name. Neophytes are recruited into and gain perspective on such practices and come to identify themselves as actors of more or less influence, more or less privilege, and more or less power in these worlds (p. 60).

For Holland et al. figured worlds are “historical phenomena, to which we are recruited or into which we enter, which themselves develop through the works of their participants” (p. 41). They are ways of feeling or understanding the world in which we exist, rather than an actual concrete ‘thing’. These worlds are socially organised, developed through interactions that position, and reposition the self and others. As such, people gather an understanding of the cultural world and themselves within it, through the collective significance and meaning of a number of different practices and cultural resources available within figured worlds. This leads to Holland et al.’s idea that figured worlds and those that inhabit these worlds are dynamic, at once multiple and partial (p. 56).

Drawing on Vygotsky's ideas in relation to play and imagination, Holland et al. argue that in the specific settings or environments in which we all live our lives, we collectively imagine or 'figure' our worlds. A figured world is summarised by Holland et al. as "a socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others" (p. 54). These collectively recognised signs and symbols comprise of everyday activities, acts, discourses, stories, languages and "taken-for-granted, generic figures" (p. 59). Importantly for Holland et al., these cultural artefacts can be tangible or symbolic but all gain meaning through shared cultural understanding and interactions, providing a connection to their figured worlds. The assigning of culturally understood values to specific characters, acts and symbols inform members as to what is important in the figured world.

#### *3.3.2.1 Cultural Models and Standard Plots*

The process of human development is far from individual. Most of what people know and believe about the world they inhabit derives from shared 'taken-for-granted' cultural models that clarify what makes up the world and how this works (Holland and Quinn, 1987:4). Talk, both linguistic and non-verbal, is an important cultural resource that brings meaning to cultural models. However, Holland et al. (1998:297) note that cultural models are more than just discourse; they are "simplified social 'scenes', imagined courses of social interaction" that provide meaning to past, present and future experiences and help identify and position particular actors and activities through messages that suggest an archetypal way of being and becoming. Figured worlds are also termed 'figurative' worlds or 'narrativized' worlds (Holland et al. 1998:53), in the sense that everyday goings-on, interpreted through previous experiences by inhabitants, continuously form the figured world.

Thus, Holland et al. argue that the creation and recreation of figured worlds involves the transference of the everydayness of social action into intimate understandings used to interpret and reinterpret on-the-ground happenings. Their use of the term 'narrativized' worlds highlights the idea that the 'goings-on' within figured worlds have some connection, forming a cohesive story. These expectations of commonplace happenings



within the figured world, meld together to become what Holland et al. call a 'standard plot' (p. 53). These collectively recognised stories are generalised from historical experiences which individuals interpret and measure themselves against, becoming a mediation device. As people become more familiar with these 'storylines' they can begin to make assumptions as to what may happen in the present and the future and assign meaning to characters, activities and actions within the figured world. Holland et al. note that within these standard plots are recognisable figures, significant actors that play an important role as a comparable figure, used by individuals to understand particular practices associated with these characters and furthermore to mediate and make sense of the self (p. 62). An example of a standard plot relating to my study is one that suggests that male primary teachers will progress easily into leadership positions before becoming a head teacher.

Underlining the complexity of figured worlds, being both stable and dynamic, is the diversity of standard plots shaped through a continual shift in individual understanding of the cultural world. Importantly for Holland et al., shared cultural models adapt and reform to the complexities of everyday life whilst still allowing for generalisations (p. 55). This point continues to recognise the multiple and partial nature of figured worlds, evolving and developing around the many explanations of activity (p. 56). For example, working in the world of a primary school numerous interpretations of living through and in activity can create uncertainty in comprehending everyday practice. Student teachers, whilst on placement, may display inappropriate language or behaviour with both staff and children at first, until they become more familiar with the cultural models that exist there.

Furthermore, Holland et al. suggest that identities can be both figurative or narrativized, and positional or relational. Hence, culturally understood categories, such as gender, class and ethnicity (p. 127-8) are important indicators of social standing within the figured world. Holland et al. also clarify that discourses bring categories with them, carrying messages about cultural resources: messages about who uses them and how they are used. Discourses intertwine with power and knowledge, associating people with particular cultural artefacts that signify specific power relations, helping to develop figurative identities. Figurative identities, therefore, have to do with aspects of an

individual's 'world that make it a cultural world' (Holland et al, 1998; 127). Additionally, Barron (2014: 255) suggests that:

Figurative identities are created from experiences, activities and utterances provided to us by others and from our responses to them and from the responses of others to the ways in which we appropriate, participate in and transform experiences, activities and utterances.

For Holland et al., discourses "'afford' ways of doing not only things but people" (p. 62). In this sense, male primary teachers are afforded culturally recognised ways of being and behaving, evoking figurative identities such as the sports coach or the disciplinarian. Thus, through social action, discourses and other cultural resources provide a link to both social and cultural contexts, to particular figured worlds and in doing so becoming 'figured' in that world. However, unlike the Foucauldian idea of discourse, where focus is placed on privileged or hegemonic discourses for self-identification, Holland et al. claim that to fully understand how people make sense of themselves, all cultural artefacts we interact with within figured worlds are important (p. 62). Discourse, for Holland et al., be it hegemonic or otherwise has the potential for diverse interpretations in different situations as they all have 'developmental histories', an association with different activities, carried out by individuals in a variety of environments that bring a diversity of meaning to cultural resources (p. 61). They consider culturally and socially constructed discourses as the 'living tools' of the self where individual and collective stories can become cultural resources used to mediate feelings and thoughts. Holland et al. maintain "...identities are formed in the process of participating in activities organised by figured worlds" (p. 57). Consequently, the self is always rooted in social practice, structured around different sets of situated understandings and expectations.

### 3.3.3 Positional identities

Drawing on Bourdieu's work on power and position, Holland et al. note that positionality is integral to understanding who we are in relation to others. They recognise that claiming social positions in particular figured worlds is a complex matter as this process happens over time, through everyday social relationships and around cultural artefacts, or 'indices of positioning' found within specific figured worlds (p. 133). Everyday activities and the associated power relations help people understand their positioning

relative to others in the figured world in terms of social affiliation and distance. In this sense, neophytes in figured worlds increasingly learn the meaning of particular cultural resources that include discourses, and identify themselves with these 'indices' in either a positive or a negative way. Furthermore, people within figured worlds make claims to high status positions through and in practices, as Holland et al. note:

Entitled people speak, stand, dress, emote, hold the floor—they carry out privileged activities—in ways appropriate to both the situation of the activity and their position within it. Those who speak, stand, dress, hold the floor, emote, and carry out activities in these proper ways are seen to be making claims to being entitled. Speaking certain dialects, giving particular opinions, and holding the floor are indices of claims to privilege (p. 133).

Hence, positional identities can affect an individual's agency as they directly relate to 'acts of inclusion/exclusion': the granting or refusal of access to cultural resources by entitled others. Therefore, an individual may feel either comfortable or constrained by a situation, at once mediating their position within the figured world. For example, in schools written and spoken language is peppered with acronyms, such as SLT (Senior Leadership Team), SIP (School Improvement Partner) and AfL (Assessment for Learning), understood and used by those familiar with these terms. Situations, such as staff meetings, provide spaces for the use of this language and the clarification of positioning through claims made by individuals relating to their familiarity and use of these acronyms.

Holland et al. assert that not only is an understanding of one's place in the world formed through relational identities particular to one figured world. Some relational identities, their social categories and associated artefacts, may carry meaning across a number of figured worlds although the associated power and status may differ across worlds. For example, claiming power relating to a particular social category in one figured world may not result in privileges and status in an alternative figured world (p. 135). This idea brings focus not just to the figured world of the primary school but also to alternative figured worlds the male teachers in my study may evoke in their descriptions of everyday experiences. Foster and Newman's (2005) idea that male primary teachers may suffering 'gender bruising' as they try to come to terms with being afforded a

different, low status positional identity within a feminine environment illustrates Holland et al.'s consideration of crosscutting positional markers of identity.

### *3.3.3.1 Developing a 'sense of fit' within Figured worlds*

Cultural resources form part of a complex set of social relations that play a part in what Holland (2015) calls, 'cultural games' or 'serious games'. For Bourdieu (1989), these 'games', reflect socio-political and economic hierarchies of society which are refracted into the localised world (Choudry and Williams, 2016). Within these hierarchies, 'fields of power' define social positioning (Bourdieu, 1986:41). Bourdieu suggests that recognised figures living within these cultural 'fields' engage in a range of meaningful activities, directed by a specific set of forces relating to the amount of symbolic, cultural or economic capital that they have enabling them to achieve status or prestige amongst others. Consequently, fields depend on shared assumptions about how things are 'done', marking important social positions.

Students entering into the teaching profession are entering into a new cultural and social field (Braun, 2012), where there is a need to find how they 'fit' within the field. Holland et al. make clear that figured worlds are similar to Bourdieu's 'fields', as both concepts pay attention to positions of status and how positioning influence social relationships. They note that social categories can have meaning across multiple figured worlds and are largely associated with important power structures, such as gender, class and ethnicity, bringing further understanding of our positional identity (p. 131). They suggest that 'cross-cutting' markers, such as gender, afford particular symbolic capital to individuals and groups and can create 'privileging spaces' figured by specific worlds. Undoubtedly, in reference to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, these spaces may be situations where male primary teachers are called on to 'sort out' disruptive children, or 'lead' sports teams.

Another example of a privileging space for male primary teachers is their use of 'banter' when communicating with boys. Structurally, their use of banter brings an insight into power relations between masculine and feminine behaviours. It is argued that this privileging display demonstrates how they are able to be more relaxed when dealing with conflict than female teachers as they have more 'social power' (Haase, 2008). Both

meanings combine in the relative positioning of these men as powerful and effective disciplinarians within the figured world of the primary school. However, the use of 'banter' may not be effective when teaching children in Early Years settings (0-4 years) as other social and material contexts come into play, such as privileging displays of nurture and care as a source of emotional capital (Warin, 2017).

Furthermore, Bourdieu (1989:19) argues that developing 'habitus' helps us gain a "sense of one's place" but also a "sense of the place of others". Thus, habitus is a set of habitual, embodied ways of thinking, feeling and behaving, directed by social structures. As an individual passes through social worlds, they learn 'dispositions' that are appropriate for different spaces (Miller, 2016). These "dispositions of the habitus", Bourdieu states (1977: 17-18), are permanent and embodied in physical bodies in the form of "mental dispositions" or "schemes of perception and thought". These are both general in terms of structures such as gender, and specific in terms of everyday acts and language. Bourdieu (1977) argues that these 'schemes' are 'preserved' within the group as 'memories' of behaviour that can be applied subconsciously to constantly changing situations. As such, everyday 'real' activities constitute habitus enabling individuals to accept habitus readily, perceiving the world and their position in it as 'natural'. In this sense, habitus is never "a spectacle" (Bourdieu, 1990:52) and consequently goes unremarked.

However, Bourdieu notes that the driving force for habitus is not 'rules' but achieving a 'sense of fit' within the field (Miller, 2016:332). Entering into new fields of practice attract individuals with "habitus that is practically compatible, or sufficiently close, and above all malleable and capable of being converted into the required habitus" (Bourdieu, 2000:99-100). Accommodation of an 'original habitus', formed in childhood, into a new field for a neophyte may mean that the 'fit' may be more or less comfortable (Braun, 2012). In teaching, this may mean that student teachers need to align themselves to certain dispositions and form appropriate 'cultural replies' to become "the right person for the job" (Colley, 2006:25, cited in Braun, 2012). As individuals gradually develop an awareness of an appropriate habitus, they obtain field members' dispositions and "learn to navigate the field" (Miller, 2016:332). Relating this to the figured world of primary school, the 'primary teaching habitus' is categorised as a

‘naturally’ female activity (Skelton et al, 2009), where embodied dispositions of ‘nurturing’ and ‘caring’ are considered the norm. Those teachers that embody alternative dispositions may not ‘fit’ within the field. This may mean men who teach in primary schools may need to possess a habitus that is disposed towards valued practices for their gender, such as being assertive, in order to be comfortable within the field.

However, Holland et al. maintain that afforded positions can be refused by some in the figured world and even create positions they would rather have (p. 137), suggesting people may not be completely constrained by discursive positioning as there is potential for improvisation in response to the situation. For men teaching in primary schools, gendered dispositions may demonstrate to others in the school their authority amongst the children, enabling them to refuse the positioning of ‘Other’. However, this application calls for a more nuanced understanding of gender that is missing from Bourdieu’s work as he omits to explore how different fields appropriate different ways of doing gender (Braun, 2012; Miller, 2016). Holland et al.’s conceptualisation of figured worlds as a “space of possibles” brings that nuance (p.298). They argue that cultural artefacts that may produce hierarchies of privilege, position and identities have the potential to “make a difference to the next moment of production” (p.45) rather than only generationally, as Bourdieu would have it.

Holland et al. contend that the claiming and affirmation of positional identities through growing expertise in mediation of cultural resources happens in many different ways but mostly out of awareness. This process they relate to Vygotsky’s ‘fossilisation’, where the day-to-day practices of figured worlds become automatic, forgotten and ‘unfigured’ (p. 37). These collective ‘as-if’ worlds mediate behaviour through a gradual familiarity with habitual activities, developing a growing subconscious understanding of what is valued and important, enabling individuals and groups to develop dispositions to “voice opinions or silence oneself, to enter into activities or to refrain and self-censor” (p. 138). Over time, this fossilisation informs how individuals behave in relation to cultural artefacts that exist. However, Holland et al. are keen to point out that fossilisation can be reversed when aspects of positionality moves into consciousness through “ruptures of the taken-for-granted”, accessible for reflection and remark (p. 141). Through disrupting the mundane, individuals and groups can appropriate these figured signs and

symbols in order to alter their position in the world. This 'crisis' or 'rupture', viewed in Vygotskian terms, becomes a 'turning point' in learning and the development of self, where individuals are able to interact with the social world differently through a greater understanding of their positionality and the environment.

Through continual interpretations and adjustments of the positioning and repositioning of the self and others, Holland et al.'s self-in-practice implies that responses to the field are individualistic and a person's sense of self can be numerous. They argue that culture is not an abstract system with pre-determined social divisions that Bourdieu may claim to exist. Instead, the ever-changing social and material conditions mean that there is no uniform set of meanings. Hence, we can only ever improvise within our daily experiences. In combining responses from our current positioning and our 'history-in-person', the available cultural resources can provide us with the tools we have to afford ourselves some agency. This suggests that men teaching in primary schools may not all interact in the same way with the cultural resources at hand and changes to male teacher habitus may occur continuously, counteracting the uniformity of male teacher responses found in the previous literature. However, it is important to reiterate that identities, as potential for mediating agency, are 'hard-won standpoints' – not easily reformed – dependent as they are on social recognition and acceptance within the figured world (p. 4).

### 3.3.4 Semiotic mediation and improvisation

People use cultural tools, Vygotsky argues, both in human form and as symbols, as a means of 'active adaptation' (Vygotsky, 1978: 123), a way to alter the situation in hand and consequently, identities. Concrete symbols and signs, such as social discourses, language and speech, Vygotsky thought of as a way to master one's environment and oneself, directing one's behaviour through interpersonal, intrapersonal and imaginative processes. Through intrapersonal means humans are able to internalise, make sense of and personalise cultural resources, modifying them for their next step in learning through what Vygotsky calls 'inner speech', where we gather a 'sense' of words through an internalisation of messages drawn from cultural artefacts. Hence, Vygotsky's ideas of

semiotic mediation are a means to agency, acknowledging the potential to indirectly alter our own environment and through continued effort, adjust behaviour.

Dialogically, Holland et al. consider both culture and subject position at the same time as they argue that a focus solely on cultural logic or positioning by powerful discourses only tells part of the story of identity construction. Instead, they advocate a drilling down into the 'on-the-ground' situation itself and the potential for self-development through the taking up and appropriating of the "practical artefacts of the moment" (p. 17). Furthermore, Holland et al. assert that people can use cultural resources in future situations and if used frequently, cultural products can become 'tools of agency', providing some control over behaviour through affording alternative ways of thinking and feeling about practice and those involved in it.

Holland et al. clarify that cultural artefacts bring with them into the figured world an 'intentionality' or 'a kind of force' (p. 63), gathered from past activities and which they mediate in the present. They maintain this force 'evokes' other figured worlds, the figures and the cultural resources that inhabit these alternative worlds and in doing so provides the opportunity for individuals to be repositioned in relation to these worlds. Holland et al. note that these artefacts do not need to be concrete but what they do need to have is collective significance in order to bring understanding about individuals and provide a means of agency. They also recognise the constraining nature of social positions but argue that through improvisation, based on one's historical experiences brought to the present (our history-in-person) and the cultural resources presently available, there is possibility to reform and reposition subjectivities.

#### *3.3.4.1 Transitions and possibilities*

My research aims to explore male primary teachers' identity production and performances at a time of great change: from student teacher, to newly qualified teacher and beyond. Transitions and the idea of humans learning through internalisation and reflection on mediating devices, or 'tools of identity' are important elements in Holland et al.'s framework. They assert that the telling of stories in particular figured worlds as a means of semiotic mediation enables members to 'reorientate' their understanding of self, including a "detachment from identities" that exist in other



cultural worlds (Holland et al. 1998:72). For Vygotsky, transitions help individuals reconstruct their identities, becoming aware of new ones that may be of greater value and status. He asserts this transitional learning process consists of 'leading activities' that direct human development during times of change or contradiction. Hence, engagement in contradictory activities or practices has a greater impact on thinking and memory, becoming the main source of development of an individual. (Vygotsky, 1967, pp. 15–16, cited in Chaiklin, 2003).

Furthermore, Vygotsky asserts that human learning through engagement with 'leading activities' is a collaborative process, where we grow with those around us (Chaiklin, 2003). This idea makes explicit Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), usually applied to children's learning and development but when applied to neophytes it brings focus to their activities in the social context of learning. Application of ZPD sheds light onto how men teaching in primary school learn which behaviours 'fit' for their social positioning as a neophyte teacher, although this may juxtapose their gender positioning. However, Holland et al. note that Vygotsky's ZPD is limited in its omission of how individuals may learn through support and scaffolding to extinguish particular behaviours in order to avoid punishment and discipline (p. 176).

Moreover, Holland et al. propose a paradox within heuristic development in contrast to Foucault's discursive theory of identity development and his position on the regulatory features of human artefacts outlined in Chapter 2. They argue that Foucault's work omits the agency of individuals when mediating cultural resources, such as discourses and their associated artefacts. The review of the literature in Chapter 2 has shown that discourses are powerful mediators of identities and humans are able to draw on alternative discourses that are available to position and reposition the self and others in the social world. However, Holland et al. argue that this view of self is too deterministic as it suggests people only have two choices 'to be': to conform or to fight within the discursive environment. They propose that discursive theorists, such as Foucault, position the 'subject' as, "always open to the power of the discourses and practices that describe it" (p.27). This suggests that socially constructed selves are at the mercy of the powerful discourses they encounter, subject to the categorising and positioning that these discourses command.

Although Foucault recognises there is a modicum of resistance to these discourses, this comes in the form of identification with alternate subject positions. However, these may never be a “proper fit, a totality” (Hall, 1996:3) of the person as self-identification is limited to the available discourses and practices as the only “tools that build the self in contexts of power” (Holland et al. 1998:27). Drawing on Hall (1996), Holland et al. acknowledge that discourses and associated practices may provisionally constrain identity development but they argue that people – as agentic beings – are not just ‘sutured’ to subject positions leaving no ‘wriggle room’ to be anything other than an ‘articulation’ of discursive practices. Instead, they maintain:

A better metaphor for us is not suture, which makes the person and the position seem to arrive preformed at the moment of suturing, but codevelopment—the linked development of people, cultural forms, and social positions in particular historical worlds (p.33).

This recognises social positioning as multidimensional and fluid, rather than as restrictive, creating alternative individual productions of identity, albeit through sustained effort on part of the individual.

Holland et al. reiterate the importance of Vygotsky’s idea that cultural tools and artefacts are situated in particular cultural and social contexts and already have meaning attributed to them. They argue that assigned meaning takes account of how others have used artefacts – historically and culturally, in other places and times – implying most mediating devices are not unique to individuals. ‘Encounters’ with cultural symbols will never be repeated exactly; never the same again, as through interaction and response to the environment, how we perceive and use cultural tools alter and change. Moreover, Holland et al. argue that although we are always responding to pre-existing cultural resources, through agency we can find new ways to use these and in doing so we create constantly improvised responses. Hence, “As individuals improvise their responses to social and cultural openings offered to them, identities are worked and reworked within this landscape” (Holland et al. 1998:270). Identity is, therefore, always fluid – never fixed – and we are always in the process of ‘becoming’.

Holland et al.’s framework directs them to the significant point that people exhibit agency in their responses to cultural artefacts. These responses provide opportunities

to improvise with the available cultural resources. They note that the power to reform ourselves develops through improvisations that occur “on intimate terrain as an outcome of living in, through, and around the cultural forms practiced in social life” (p.8), bringing a potential – albeit limited – to liberate ourselves from the discursive environment, learning “how to position ourselves for ourselves” (p. 63-64). In this sense, human agency affords alternative improvised responses not currently established in discourse as tools that position also provide a force for agency through the rearrangement of cultural forms. The point to make here is that for Holland et al. “position is not fate” as it is possible “for people to figure and remake the conditions of their lives” (p. 45). Holland et al. assert that this all happens in Bakhtinian ‘spaces of authoring’.

### 3.3.5 Self authoring

Adding further depth to their theory of identity and agency, Holland et al. build on Bakhtin’s concept of ‘self-authoring’ that occurs through the “orchestration of voices” (p. 178). Bakhtin’s idea of ‘voices’, suggest more complexity than Vygotsky’s mediating devices as these voices can be conflictual, their socially inscribed meanings can at once be contrasting and competing (Bakhtin, 1981). Holland et al. propose that the social force of ‘voices’ can be used to remake conditions in the social world in order to figure the environment and themselves ‘otherwise’ (p. 143). They apply Bakhtin’s idea of ‘heteroglossia’ and the dynamic nature of the word to bring understanding to how, as humans, we can hold onto many different visions of what we ‘know’, combining historical, social and cultural perspectives, in order to ‘be’.

#### 3.3.5.1 Dialogic selves

Dialogism, central to Bakhtin’s work, suggests that people never exist alone and we view this existence in relation to each other. Hence, people are always in a dialogic state with the world in a dual process of being ‘addressed’ and ‘answering’, responding in a way that takes the form of meaning making – forcing attention to the present situation and necessitates its importance in how we self-author. (Bakhtin, 1986). Vygotsky acknowledges the potential of words for semiotic mediation but Holland et al. suggest

that he omits the importance of struggles and conflicts, the disputed practices evoking power and status embedded within cultural resources (p. 176). Building on Bakhtin's work, centred on 'dialogism' and positionality, Holland et al.'s framework helps us to understand how neophytes may censure or extinguish behaviours in order to 'fit' into a social environment and the position they inhabit, developing a 'stance' towards particular 'voices' in order to "figure it otherwise" (p. 143). They extend Bakhtin's idea of 'voices' to include all social and cultural forms that tell social, relational and cultural categories of the self (p. 210). Holland et al. contend that humans 'author' the world through 'voices' – words, dialects and languages of others we have overheard – making sense of the world and ourselves through the eyes of others (p. 169). However, the fixing of people within the languages of 'heteroglossia' occurs due to restrictions in the voices that are available to them in the figured world. These voices are used in order to 'author' the world, themselves and others. This returns me to Francis's application of gender heteroglossia, where she suggests voices bring understanding to individuals as to whether their gender performances 'fit' with the dominant monoglossic account of gender and the position this affords them within the social world.

The languages of heteroglossia are defined by Bakhtin (1981:291-292) as "specific points of view on the world, forms for conceptualizing the world in words, specific world views, each characterized by its own objects, meanings and values." These systems, Bakhtin continues, may be contradictory, separate or supplement, brought together in particular orchestrated arrangements by individuals. Agency comes from choosing to orchestrate these voices in particular ways. This all happens for Bakhtin within the consciousness where heteroglossia, as a constant within the social world, provides a degree of choice in how humans self-author (Holland et al. 1998). Agency enables people to develop an 'authorial stance', creating a stable response to the environment of heteroglossia through orchestrating the various voices in similar ways (p. 174). Nevertheless, Bakhtin (1981) argues that to begin to take control over these voices, one needs to create internally persuasive discourses in opposition to the authoritarian external speech that is inscribed onto our own. He notes that although authoritative discourse – the monoglossic voice – dominates the social world it can never silence heteroglossia. Bakhtin's dialogism however, enables internally persuasive discourse to include voices

from all relevant others including those authoritative (monoglossic) and heteroglossic discourses. This reminds us of Francis's (2012) work, where she argues that within seemingly straightforward productions of gender there are contradictions, diversity and resistance within individual gender identities and performances.

Taking Bakhtin's use of literary devices of genre and language as mediation devices, Holland et al. clarify that 'I' is different from 'self' in that the sense that 'I' relates to the 'self in practice'. Their clarification situates identities within the environment where the meaning of cultural artefacts are open to nuanced interpretation. Hence, to make sense of the world and the voices that address us, we draw on languages and words of others that we have already overheard. Self-identification may be an internal experience but Holland et al. maintain that the construction of identities occurs through responding to voices that have their origin within the collective. As Bakhtin (1981:294) reiterates, initial utterances of individuals begin life "in other people's mouths", restricting individual responses to the choices available within the heteroglossic environment.

Moreover, Holland et al. note that the heteroglossic nature of the social world for Bakhtin (1981) is not always a harmonious one. Voices are conflictual: they are derived from different social, historical and cultural experiences. Holland et al. propose that our history-in-person will guide us to consider more than one possibility to 'be'. People are able to author alternative standpoints, alternative ways of being and behaving (p. 169), although the formation of these alternatives occurs within the constraints of heteroglossia. For Bakhtin (1981: 293-294), language is not just a cultural resource used for semiotic mediation; it is "shot through with intentions and accents" and partisan in nature. Hence, 'borrowing' second-hand utterances to make them our own brings agency as Braathe and Solomon (2015:154) note: "In expropriating or appropriating the words of others, we necessarily enact agency".

Bakhtin maintains that although there may be opportunities for agency in self-identification, this is not easy. The situating of heteroglossic language within various ideological, historical and social belief systems may restrict how individuals orientate themselves amongst these various different languages in order to self-author. Some voices, such as those found within the monoglossic gender matrix (Francis, 2012), carry varying amounts of status and authority, directing their orchestration. The tension

created between one's history-in-person and the available cultural resources in the present means for Holland et al. the (re)forming of identities is a demanding process. However, as agentic beings people are able to personify the 'alien word' (Bakhtin, 1981), taking a stance towards some voices as they recognise their limitations and mediate others to reform the self.

#### *3.3.5.2 Orchestration of voices*

For Bakhtin (1981), the process of orchestration begins with 'one's own word' (p. 345-346), assimilated as internally persuasive discourse. The internally persuasive word is "half-ours and half-someone else's" as only in history and through orchestration in the present, utterances become our own (Bakhtin, 1981:345). Hence, in internally persuasive discourse two separate voices, our own and someone else's, need to be interpreted in order to provide meaning to utterances in the present. Bakhtin sees this internal dialogue as the 'arena' where "intense interaction and struggle between one's own and another word is being waged" (p. 354).

For Holland et al., an utterance is shaped not only from within - making the word one's own - but also by the immediate and broader social context suggesting that the process of 'answering' is one where utterances are constructed with an awareness of social relationships and material conditions. People are constantly in a state of being 'addressed' and 'answering' as conditions and relationships continue in a state of flux: a reminder of Holland et al.'s ever-changing self-in-practice. Drawing upon Holland et al., Braathe and Solomon (2015:155) note that:

We author the self through the appropriation of genres in an ongoing process of addressivity. It is here that agency lies, in the choices that we make in a never-ending story of self.

Bakhtin clarifies in his assertion that people have no choice to answer the claims of the world. Moreover, our agency materialises from rejection or appropriation of available genres – in how we choose to address others and ourselves.

Internally persuasive discourse is never static as its changeability stems from its interpretation – applied to new contexts and conditions – creating new liberated words (Bakhtin, 1981: 345-346). The dialogism of internally persuasive discourse occurs

through struggles, Bakhtin continues, where a war for supremacy occurs between differing points of view from other internally persuasive discourses. For Holland et al., this all happens within the 'space for authoring' (p. 169), a particular zone of proximal development where 'voices' support neophytes in learning who they are. Here a struggle for control ensues amongst our many perspectives, methods and ideals each with its own intention and authority. Developing an authorial stance is difficult and time-consuming Holland et al. maintain, as people have to operate within the constraints of heteroglossia, trying to orchestrate different voices, all inscribed with differing status in how they may be orchestrated. Nevertheless, they assert that individuals are able to "escape from being ventriloquated" by these powerful voices and make a stand against them, 'answering' with an alternative voice within the social environment (p. 185).

Moreover, making an authorial stance can become more important to those individuals who have already started to engage in the struggle to liberate themselves from authoritative discourse. Bakhtin explains, "The importance of struggling with another's discourse, its influence in the history of an individual's coming to ideological consciousness, is enormous" (1981: 348). Hence, the creation of internally persuasive discourse that stands up against such images and discourse by means of objectification has the potential to 'rupture' the sense of self, removing aspects of positional identities from the subconscious to the conscious, making them accessible for comment and reflection. Individuals are able to mediate agency to develop their 'own voice', answering both external and personal voices in their worlds to develop their own 'authorial stance' and consequently alter the nature of their identity.

Bakhtin (1981) clarifies that individuals who have already begun to liberate themselves from the discourses of others and make their own voice are more able to "rearrange, reword, rephrase, orchestrate different voices and develop some authority over these voices" in order to develop their own authorial stance (p. 348). Hence, those teachers who are able to make a stand against the dominant gender discourses, sorting out and orchestrating the voices of heteroglossia differently, have the potential to free themselves from discursive positioning. Conversely, student teachers as neophytes in the figured world with less experience of mediating the available cultural forms may find

difficulty in offering alternative responses to the material conditions and social relations they encounter.

### *3.3.5.3 Improvisation*

In his earlier work, Bakhtin posits the idea that in order to fully gain a sense of self there must be a meeting of two 'consciousnesses', the formation of an awareness of another consciousness outside the self (Bakhtin et al. 1994: 5). To generate a sense of self, a human needs to contemplate the other self, one who is placed with "the world behind his back" (p.6). Each self sees and experiences the world differently but the 'other', with "an authorial excess of seeing" (p. 7) gives an alternative consciousness to the 'passive I'. The 'outsideness' of the other's experience enables the perception of the whole self and in this sense individuals can come to know themselves 'otherwise' through interpretation of messages from utterances gifted from the other, more active and creative self. Holland et al. claim that this demonstrates the 'heteroglossic' nature of self (p. 143) and illustrates the continual construction of languages and identities through 'addressivity'; humans are always answering words and voices directed to them.

Developing 'outsideness', where the inner struggle with other discourses can lead to ideological consciousness and development of the "I-for-myself", enabling a liberation from the authoritative discourse of the 'other' (Bakhtin 1981: 348). Holland et al. elaborate further by indicating that we are able to gain 'outsideness' by seeing ourselves in direct relation to the cultural resources that exist within the figured world. For example, male primary teachers may develop 'outsideness' by taking a step back from their immediate experience and come to understand how they may be read by others as particular figures, such as the authoritarian or disorganised male teacher, even though these figures do not form part of their own daily life. Agency for these teachers may emerge in how they address and answer these images formed within the monoglossic gender matrix.

This mixing of voices within a single concrete utterance Bakhtin (1981) sees as "hybridization of languages" or 'doublevoicedness' (p. 325). This internal dialogue can occur both with imaginary others, from the past, present and future or in direct social relations through dialogue with real others. The self-authoring process is open-ended as



each utterance, Bakhtin suggests, becomes a new way to make meaning. The creation of the new word through dialogic processes brings forth other new words, applied in different ways or to new experiences. This new fluid discourse helps organise our inner speech, developing further understanding of the environment and ourselves. Holland et al. contend that once people are able to improvise with internally persuasive discourse they can create a vision beyond current understanding, by self-authoring an alternative identity, and as Bakhtin would put it “reveal ever newer *ways to mean* [author’s italics]” (1981:346). Holland et al. note that improvisation of internally persuasive discourse returns us to the paradoxical position where cultural artefacts that shape the authoring space can both define and liberate the self. They argue that the navigation through social life and the discourses that figure it enable people to imagine themselves ‘otherwise’ within the space for authoring – between the boundaries of collective understanding and social positioning. This can lead to the development of alternative identities, alternative positions and through mutual ‘outsideness’, alternative worlds.

### 3.4 Operationalising the theory

Application of Figured Worlds theory enables me to argue that a primary school is a figured world in which there are collectively recognised characters, such as the authoritarian teacher who ‘tells off’ the ‘naughty children’, or the sporty teacher, who always manages the school football team. There are collectively understood and significant cultural symbols within this figured world, such as the wearing of lanyards, formal and informal styles of dress, and the giving out of reward stickers and punishments. Language within the primary school is also figured. Acronyms describe certain people, objects, processes and ideas, such as IEPs (Individual Education Plans), PP (pupil premium), SEN (special educational needs), and are understood and used by all that inhabit this figured world. In primary schools, there are collectively recognised rules and routines that different members of the figured world participate in, such as lining up before entering the building, taking assemblies and putting chairs onto the tables at home time. These recognisable figures, performances and cultural resources all help frame the teacher’s developing understanding of self and positionality within practice.

Particular cultural models also exist within the figured world of the primary school. These “prototypical event sequences” (Holland and Quinn, 1987) identify and give meaning to particular figures. These characters partake in collectively recognised performances, some of which evoke ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’ gender stereotypes, such as the caring and nurturing early years’ teacher or the authoritarian Year 6 teacher. Teachers, working within the figured world, use these powerful benchmarks to gain a sense of their positioning and status, figuring themselves and others in relation to particular ‘standard plots’. Holland et al.’s framework enables exploration into how my participants are positioned firstly as neophytes and secondly as men within the figured world.

In the world of the primary school, particular discourses dominate, having a significant impact on the teachers that work there. In a figured world of primary school, certain values lead to discourses of accountability and performativity operating alongside other voices to orchestrate in terms of care and nurture. For male primary teachers there are dominant gender discourses that crosscut these discourses, predicating the particular kinds of gender relations male teachers will encounter in the figured world. Recognisable acts, characters and positions construct meaning for the men about who they are and how they do ‘male primary teacher’. The positioning of men in primary school occurs through evocations of gender positional markers that are ‘double-edged’. They may be figured as a strong, necessary role model, or as ‘a bit odd’ (Jones, 2007) and a ‘joke’ (Cushman, 2012). Each has a collectively understood status and value. These voices from the monoglossic gender matrix dominate the figured world for male teachers and influence internally persuasive discourse.

The male primary teachers in my study were self-authoring, developing their self-in-practice both in relation to their gender and within daily encounters with cultural resources available in the primary school. They each brought their history-in-person to their role as primary teachers, used to make sense of their positioning, initially as neophytes, and then as more experienced teachers. I wanted to find out how they experience the figured world for themselves, how they used their history-in-person and the cultural tools that were available to them. I wanted to see if time and experience within the figured world influenced how these male teachers were able to mediate

agency to alter their behaviour and positioning, and improvise with internally persuasive discourse.

As noted in the literature review, emotion is central to teachers' professional identity development (Zembylas, 2003; Demeitriou et al. 2009). Thus, I needed my chosen theoretical framework to provide a lens to explore how my participants emotionally respond to their experiences in the figured world of the primary school. Although Holland et al. do consider the role of emotions as an important signifier mediating an understanding of self they overlook the potential contribution of Vygotsky's less developed and less recognised concept of *perezhivanie*. Additionally, *perezhivanie* brings a deeper focus to the emotional responses and replies used to author the self and the world.

*Perezhivanie* has multiple and contested meanings and is more open to interpretation due to differences in opinion regarding its recent translation from Russian. With this in mind, I propose to use the term as Blunden (2016: 18) does, defining *perezhivanie* as "the emotional and visceral impact of the situation on the person". Moreover, this emphasises the effect of the surrounding conditions on an individual: "how [conditions] are perceived and felt by them, how they cope with them" (Ibid: 19) and the developmental consequences of each emotional experience. The impact of the historical and sociocultural environment is central to Holland et al.'s framework but what *perezhivanie* brings is its focus not only on the memorable experience itself, but on also how it is 'processed' by the individual. It is the link between the internal experience and the reality outside the person: "an indivisible unity of personal characteristics and situational characteristics, which are represented in the *perezhivanie*" (Vygotsky, 1934, cited in Gonzalez Rey, 2016).

The concept of *perezhivanie* also directs focus to the 'processing' of 'a lived experience' that is constitutive in the identification of self. Gonzalez Rey (2015: 420) sees this intuitive processing of experience as a system of senses: an expression of consciousness. For him, *perezhivanie* combines thinking with emotions: it is a "unit that integrates emotions, perceptions, and thoughts, and that also might integrate the 'full vitality of life'" (Gonzalez Rey, 2016: 348). He considers *perezhivanie* as a unit of 'subjective

sense', of bringing into a person's awareness their emotive response to the environment (Gonzalez Rey, 2013). Taking note of perezhivanie in this way draws attention to how male primary teachers make meaning of themselves as a social being, developing a conscious sense of self (Gonzalez Rey, 2016), since it refers to how they observe, emotionally experience, appropriate, adopt, and understand their entire situation. There are assumptions in the research explored in Chapter 2 that male primary teachers interpret their experiences in similar ways. However, the concept of perezhivanie offers a way of understanding how the same experience may be construed, understood and lived through by different people in different ways (Gonzalez Rey, 2015: 434), recognising the diversity in how we process and respond to similar situations as agentic beings.

Furthermore, perezhivanie directs focus to how we create newer ways to mean, in part through our emotional reactions towards utterances and our growing awareness of these responses. Emotional replies form part of Bakhtin's dialogic process of orchestration, shaping improvisations to internally persuasive discourse and consequently, how we author the self. It facilitates understanding of how male primary teachers may be 'authoring the world' and themselves in their own way through enacting agency even though they may be involved in similar experiences. This adds further weight to Holland et al.'s point that humans are able to free themselves of the tyranny of the environment through improvisation and new interpretations, leading to a (re)construction of identities within each moment. In this sense, perezhivanie enables my research to focus on the 'unforgettable' experiences (Blunden, 2016) of my participants and how they interpret and respond to these experiences in order to make sense of themselves. It adds depth to Holland et al.'s point that identities, with the propensity to be habitual and beyond our awareness, through 'rupture' are brought into the consciousness. Perezhivanie supports the exploration of how people make sense of 'rupture' and consequently themselves. It moves beyond proposals from the current field that male primary teachers, involved in similar experiences, will react in comparable ways and develop similar understandings of the environment and self.

Both Francis and Holland et al.'s use of Bakhtin enables a focus on the ways in which male primary teachers self-author, developing their self-in-practice over time and in

relation to others. Hence, my chosen theoretical framework directs attention to the idea of potential resistance to the dominant gender discourses that operate within the figured world of the primary school, and the ways in which my participants might exercise agency and improvise with these cultural resources in order to 'do' male primary teacher differently. These theoretical considerations led to a re-working of the original research questions, with a stronger focus on positionality, agency and the self-in-practice in order to find out how my participants experience the figured world of the primary school. My final research questions are the following:

- How do early career male teachers describe their positionality in the primary school?
- To what extent do these men describe possibilities to mediate agency in their accounts of being a teacher?
- How does male primary teachers' self-authoring change over time?

## 4 Methodology: Being and becoming a researcher in the Figured World of Academia

The previous chapters have situated this study in both the current field of research and the chosen theoretical constructs to understand male primary teachers' experiences in schools. Here, I explore the methodological decisions made that supports the collection, analysis and presentation of data. This includes outlining methods of participant selection, data collection and analytical procedures. I consider the building of a scholarly identity as a beginning researcher through the application of Holland et al.'s idea of 'self-in-practice'. This adds to the exploration of researcher impact and ethical judgements made. My own learning journey brings further insight to the particular field of study. I argue that the world of doctoral research and writing is a figured world in itself and through my constant interactions within the environment of academia, my identity in this world is 'always becoming'. Writing is social practice with values and shared meaning, and writing at a doctoral level has specific sociocultural meaning attached. As I write, I am not just writing the specifics of the research but the process of writing is shaping who I am, how I am situated within this research, and my position within the figured world of doctoral studies.

### 4.1 Research orientation and design: an interpretivist approach to qualitative research

The very first step in a research project, that comes before a question is even conceived, is to define a position with respect to what can be known about the phenomenon of interest. How the researcher sees the phenomenon determines not only what questions can be asked about it but how investigations are conducted and what findings can be developed (Duffy & Bowe, 2014:1).

Directed by the above point, the aim of this research is to explore how male primary teachers are making sense of themselves and others within the figured world of the primary school. Guiding the methodology and methods is a focus on both my participants' and my own interpretations of social 'reality' at the start of their teaching careers. Situating their descriptions of social practices, interactions and discourses within the conceptual framework outlined in the previous chapter, enables knowledge and understanding to be gathered about their sense of self. This has led me to adopt an

interpretivist stance within the study, as it was necessary to choose a methodology that recognised the complexities of identity development within figured worlds. This ontological perspective grounds the research in qualitative methodology. Mason (1996) suggests that qualitative strategies bring flexibility and sensitivity to the social world being studied, essential for my research as it is situated within the 'real life' context of primary schools and teaching. Thus, qualitative methodology supports my exploration of the figured world of the primary school through directing focus to personal viewpoints, backgrounds and experiences.

Qualitative analysis is "systematically interpreting what people say and do" (Sullivan, 2013:8) but as Mason (1996) points out, this does not mean it should not be methodical and rigorous. Taking account of these concerns when designing my study, I developed a strategic plan of how, where and when my research would take place but at the same time maintaining sensitive and flexible decision-making to take account of the fluidity of the context (Mason, 1996). According to Lichtman (2013), qualitative research needs to consider both researcher and participant voices, as my own voice adds another layer of interpretation to the initial interpretations of lived experiences described by my participants. My interpretivist approach enabled me to embrace the multiplicity and interpretive nature of doing qualitative research. Its holistic nature supported my investigation of the dynamic development of male primary teachers' identities as it brought an awareness to the shifting landscape of the primary school rather than understanding their experiences as stand-alone units of data. However, I found using an interpretive approach difficult to grasp at first. Drawing on my past and present experience as a primary teacher and Initial Teacher Training (ITT) tutor, I had in mind exactly how I would conduct this research and what the outcomes would be before I began. Nevertheless, as time went on I began to understand how my own identity – as a primary teacher, university tutor and a woman – was shaping my initial interpretations of my participants' experiences. I started to recognise how my own 'history-in-person' was influencing my research, directing focus to the multi-layered nature of both my own and my participants' activity.

Using a qualitative research strategy enabled me to take account of how the male primary teachers in this study develop a sense of who they are. The approach

acknowledges that identities are shaped through interpretations of the social world. Furthermore, as Bryman (2012:36) notes, qualitative research recognises that social reality is “a constantly shifting emergent property of individuals’ creation”, reflecting my theoretical position and my focus on the relationship between the individual and the sociocultural world. He advocates the importance of seeing experiences through participants’ eyes, understanding and using their frames of reference. In addition, he proposes that in the gathering of legitimate knowledge of the social world, three layers of interpretation occur. Initially the researcher offers an interpretation of the participants’ interpretations, which are further interpreted in terms of the models, theories and related literature. Hence, taking an interpretivist stance – focusing on viewpoints of different individuals amongst a specified group, male primary teachers – I hoped would bring new insights into the ‘on-the-ground’ happenings within their figured worlds.

Evocative of Holland et al.’s idea that individuals come to understand themselves and their environment through daily activity, Blackledge and Hunt (1985) suggest four assumptions that underpin an interpretative stance in research. They argue that interpretivist research needs to be situated in the day-to-day activities of humans in order to understand macro social conditions. The second assumption they highlight is the implication that people have some agency in the creation and involvement of daily acts. These points align with my theoretical framework leading to an increasing awareness whilst interpreting my data that everyday activity – evolving within sociocultural and historical landscapes – provides opportunities for some autonomy within my participants’ ‘patterns of action’ (p. 235). Their third assumption notes that everyday activity consists of humans interacting with each other and results in a creation of meaning for both our own and others’ actions. Thus, my participants’ interpretation of their own and others’ ‘subsequent action’ (p. 235), adds another interpretative layer to my analysis, helping to answer my research questions.

Blackledge and Hunt’s final assumption is consistent with my chosen theoretical framework that recognises both the local and the structural help construct our understanding of the social world and our place within it. They suggest that the continually developing meanings of daily life are negotiated through social relations,



which in turn helps modify our understanding and perspectives of self and environment. They acknowledge that there may not be an equal sharing of viewpoints as power relations impact on this negotiation process (p. 236). Consequently, with these four assumptions guiding my methodology, I quickly realised that the answers I was seeking would be multiple and complex and, as Tanggaard (2009) suggests, it would be foolish to begin to look for a single, stable truth to my research questions. I welcomed the idea that using an interpretivist approach meant that there was “no particular right or correct path to knowledge” (Smith, 1993:5, cited in Thanh and Thanh, 2015). There was no single answer for me to find.

In summary, the interpretivist paradigm gave me permission to acknowledge that my data would consist of a plenitude of meanings and that I would not be telling one single story. This guided my analysis in finding out how my participants interpreted their own and others’ activity, recognising the fluidity of meaning they attached to cultural symbols and signs. Importantly, I was open to all of their activities without being restricted to hunting for an elusive answer. As a researcher, I was now beginning to understand that the data I collected would be saturated in meaning.

## 4.2 Arguing the case for Case studies

Directed by the interpretivist approach that recognises the importance of humans interacting within a specific local context and the multiple perspectives that stem from activity within this environment, I decided to choose a qualitative multi-case study design, favoured by many interpretivist researchers (Willis, 2007). I decided that it was inappropriate to use an ethnographic approach, as although this was a longitudinal study – interviewing my participants over a period of three years – I was not planning to become directly involved in their way of life through observations and immersion into a primary school setting, typical of ethnographic research (Silverman, 2005). Moreover, as Chadderton and Torrance (2011) assert, case study methodology enables researchers gain a greater understanding of complex social phenomena: in my case, the ways in which early career male teachers come to understand themselves and others in the figured world of the primary school. A case study approach facilitates answers to the question of how do these teachers come to understand their social reality and

themselves within it. Through an in-depth enquiry that case study research facilitates, I can start to question the continuing authority of 'common-sense' assumptions about male primary teachers and the impact that dominant gender discourses has on identity construction and performance.

A case study approach was significant in my research design for a number of reasons. The importance of exploring the development of identities within localised experiences called for a method that recognised the complexities and situated meanings that shape daily life. Freebody (2003:81) argues that case studies: "show a strong sense of time and place; they represent a commitment to the overwhelming significance of localized experience". Additionally, Bryman (2012) suggests that their effectiveness as a research design is a consequence of the researcher becoming highly sensitive to factors that are influencing the performance of observed patterns of behaviour within specific social contexts. As such, case studies can bridge the gap between "theorizing 'in a vacuum'" (Freebody, 2003: 81), as they allow for purposeful reflection between theoretical and empirical spheres in order to begin to understand the diversity of practice. This was important for me as the longitudinal nature of my study allowed me to develop regular reflections situated in both the theoretical and empirical, which in turn supported my interpretation of specific events within my participants' lived experiences.

Flyvberg (2006) and Ruddin (2006) argue that the case study approach and its value to social science is "misunderstood" as they both note that any discipline needs good quality, thorough examples to reinforce its effectiveness. Both Flyvberg and Ruddin contend that case study methodology brings an opportunity to gather 'intimate knowledge' of everyday human development through its closeness to real-life events (Flyvberg, 2006: 6) and, as a strong form of 'hypothetical-deductive theorizing', it has the ability to map a pattern of meaning onto the case (Ruddin, 2006:800). They suggest that case studies allow researchers to achieve a nuanced insight into their empirical setting through the analysis of fine-grained details of real-life contexts that may be missing from research using alternative methodologies. Tight (2017) agrees, noting that what makes case study research useful is its small scale and in-depth focus. Intensive in nature, the job of the researcher is to gather as much data as possible about the case. He suggests that case study design is feasible for an individual doctoral researcher with

only limited resources at hand, as with minimal equipment, researchers can still can produce good quality research.

A case study approach places importance on the richness of data generated rather than generalisations, which helps define the limits of the case (Patton, 2002). Flyvberg (2006) notes that the advantages of ‘closing in’ on reality as it unfolds forces the researcher to question their own preconceptions and rethink their explanations of the field. The proposition that data derived from case study methods is not easily reduced into categories and themes – as it focuses on the minutiae of real life experiences – is not an issue according to Flyvberg, as the multiplicity of the data brings deeper layers of understanding to the phenomenon. Moreover, he asserts that the acknowledgement that case study data analysis is time consuming is a small price to pay for capturing the “rich ambiguity of human life” through the focus on the “little things” (Nietzsche, 1974:335, cited in Flyvberg, 2006:21).

Using a multi-case design helps develop further understanding of how and why certain patterns are found in data from similar contexts. Yin (2009) argues that a strength of multiple case study design is in its ability to focus analysis on important events – both historical and contemporary – and the associated behaviour, bringing further understanding to the experiences of particular groups of people. Morehouse (2011) concurs, noting that the use of a multi-case design leads to the acceptance of multiple perspectives of social reality and consequently, to a more comprehensive understanding of the ‘phenomenon’ or situation. Using multiple case studies meant that interpretations of reality were gathered through a “series of individual eyes” (McQueen, 2002, cited in Thanh and Thanh, 2015), which lead to a narrowing of focus on the specifics of each individual participant and their self-identification. This reduced the need to forge comparisons between my cases: an acknowledged weakness of comparative case study method (Flyvberg, 2006).

At this stage, clarity was needed as to what my ‘case’ was as there has been considerable leeway as to what counts as a ‘case’ in social research (Freebody, 2003; Bryman, 2012; Lichtman, 2013). The case presented here is the story men tell about the process of being and becoming primary teachers. Advocates of case study approaches (Flyvberg,

2006, Ruddin, 2006, Yin, 2009) acknowledge that the methodology has its critics, including those with a Positivist stance who suggests that as a methodology they are less rigorous, lack objectivity and are unable to generalise findings. However, Bryman (2012) clarifies that qualitative research, carried out through an interpretivist lens, as my study does, considers social reality as “a consistently shifting emergent property of individuals’ creation” (Bryman, 2012:36), rejecting the Positivist vision of an external social world that has a formal, objective quality.

Furthermore, using case studies helped me to develop a ‘thick description’, (Geertz, 1973, cited in Bryman, 2012) of male primary teachers’ social reality. As their narratives began to unfold, I was able to capture their telling of complex and conflictual stories for readers to immerse themselves within, discovering their own interpretation and meaning of the events and figured worlds described in these stories. I accepted that the research aim and ontology had placed a limit on the number of participants needed; however, as I was generating an understanding of their interpretation of events and activity within specific cultural contexts rather than testing a hypothesis (O’Donoghue, 2007), this was not an issue. Moreover, having seven cases to analyse provided more than enough data to “speak intelligently” about my participant’s identity development as primary teachers (p. 56).

### 4.3 Investigating ‘social reality’: Analysing discourse

The next step in the process of developing my methodological approach was to consider my unit of analysis. It made sense that the unit of analysis in my research were the typical stories, words and phrases my participants were assuming and inviting the listener to assume (Gee, 2012), situated within their figured worlds and used to make sense of themselves and the environment. Examining the language used in their modes of self-authoring from an interpretivist position enabled me to understand how they negotiate their identities in relation to cultural rules, concepts and resources they encounter within the social world of primary school. Moreover, I was looking to see how they were making sense of dominant discourses within their figured worlds and how they responded to them within their talk in order to understand themselves and their positioning.

The interpretative stance taken in my work acknowledges Bakhtin's (1981) conceptualisation of dialogism – acknowledging that people produce new meaning about themselves and the environment as a response between a self and an 'other'. Language for Bakhtin exists at the boundaries between speakers – between 'consciousnesses' – a constant generation of responsive interactions that brings shape to the self within the context of social reality. According to Bakhtin et al. (1994), the generation of new meaning stems from the interactive and dialogic nature of discourse and consciousness, which directs my study towards the idea that discourse is more than just language; it informs how we understand, interact with and produce the social world. Importantly, dialogism helps direct focus to the purpose, creation and variation of talk as a means to investigate "What people are doing with their words and how they do it" (Harding 2015:152).

Treating language as central to research, Potter (2004: 609) suggests asking three questions when conducting discourse analysis:

1. What is this discourse doing?
2. How is this discourse constructed to make this happen?
3. What resources are available to perform this activity?

These action-orientated questions supported both the open-ended nature of my research questions and Holland et al.'s approach to discourse as a mediation tool within the process of self-identification. Importantly, discourse analysis as a 'fine-grained analysis of talk', recognises the importance of language as a practice, situated in particular contexts with performative qualities (Bryman, 2012:522).

According to Keller (2013), trying to analyse discourse is an attempt to stabilise, albeit temporarily, sociocultural meanings interpreted by people within a specific context. Conducting discourse analysis implies an interest and curiosity in the detail of language use and focuses the analysis on how humans construct social and psychological realities through talk and text (Stanely and Crane, 2015). Discourse analysis directed my investigation towards the relationship between speaking as a social practice and the figured world. This includes a focus on 'mean-making' in relation to sociocultural and

historical experiences and recognising ‘key moments’ (Sullivan, 2012) that occur in participant’s speech. Keller (2013) asserts that discourse analysis does not advocate a particular method, instead it refers to a specific research perspective, which shapes not only the research questions but also the methodology, recognising the interrelationship of the research design with the theoretical and disciplinary background. Although Keller proposes that discourse analysis is heterogeneous – as it needs to ‘fit’ within an interpretative paradigm or similar – he argues for commonalities within the analysis of discourse, namely:

- A concern with the actual use of (written or spoken) language and other symbolic forms in social practices;
- An emphasis that in the practical use of signs, meanings of phenomena are socially constructed and these phenomena are thereby constituted in their social reality;
- A claim that individual instances of interpretation may be understood as parts of a more comprehensive discourse structure that is temporarily produced and stabilized by specific institutional-organizational contexts; and
- Assumptions that the use of symbolic orders is subject to rules of interpretation and action that may be reconstructed. (p. 51)

These commonalities were useful in helping me to make sense of my participants’ experiences as they guided my interpretations of talk gathered as data, developing the analysis in ‘bespoke ways’ (Antaki, 2008:6).

Tailoring the methodology whilst supporting the theoretical underpinning of my research directed me to the use of a dialogical approach as it brought understanding to my participants’ heuristic development. It also made sense when considering Bakhtin’s dialogism is central to both Francis’ and Holland et al.’s work. I needed my discourse analysis to be compatible with the assumptions of dialogism; that dialogue is contextual, social and incomplete. Sullivan (2012:3), in his consideration of a dialogical approach to qualitative research, asserts that Bakhtin’s reading of dialogue “explicitly link the thinking, feeling subject to language within a set of multiple, reflexive dialogues between the ‘self’ and ‘other’”. Drawing on dialogism as a basis for a research design

focused the data analysis on the 'language', rather than just the words spoken by my participants. Languages direct the researcher's attention to the landscape of 'heteroglossia' in which the languages are evolving: "Language is heteroglot" (Tinggaard, 2009:1506). Furthermore, dialogism directs my analysis to the points of view or 'contextual overtones' that exist within the word (Bakhtin 1981:293).

Dialogism brings into focus how the male primary teachers in this study 'address' and 'answer' utterances they encounter in the figured world and as, "every utterance is also a responsive link to the continuous chain of other utterances" (Bakhtin et al. 1994:5), it guides my analysis towards my response to their replies. For example, my participants may respond to or 'answer' voices that relate to dominant gender discourses within their narrative, such as explaining that they chose to teach as they wanted to become a positive male role model for children. They may also choose to address voices that stem from my position as an ITT Tutor, which may in turn elicit my own situated response. Moreover, using dialogism to frame the analysis, I began to understand my participants, not just by listening to them, but also by interpreting their interactions, meanings and intentions, going "beyond, beneath and around words" (Litchman, 2012:34).

Gillespie and Cornish (2014) cite a number of reasons why dialogism fits neatly within the interpretivist paradigm as a qualitative research method. They assert that dialogism recognises the power of social interaction and therefore, it enables researchers to focus on the messiness of lived realities that provide situated meaning. Dialogism also acknowledges the temporal aspect of the meaning of utterances, as they note, citing Bakhtin (1981:293), that people "struggle to bend the significance of second-hand words". This guided how I was interpreting the mean-making of past, present and future responses made by my participants - important in making sense of Holland et al.'s 'self-in-practice'.

The focus on language and discourse as mediating devices to understand identities helped me to notice my participants' 'addressivity' and 'self-authoring' within the landscape of heteroglossia. Hong et al. (2017:26) argue that when used as an approach to data, Bakhtin's (1981) 'double-voiced discourse', assists research in "avoid[ing] a potential fallacy" of looking for elusive patterns or falling into the trap of creating

tentative themes, just because that is “what good qualitative researchers do” (St Pierre and Jackson, 2014, cited in Hong et al, 2017). Alternatively, focusing on the languages of heteroglossia and how they interact is argued to be not only acceptable but also essential in dialogic research (Tanggaard, 2009; Sullivan, 2012; Gillespie and Cornish 2014; Hong et al. 2017).

When investigating the tension within dialogic research, Hong et al. (2017) draw on Bakhtin’s idea of a self that develops through and within social responses. They claim that a focus on the struggle between centripetal and centrifugal forces within utterances recognises the dynamic nature of tension between ‘truths’. Adopting this position is useful as it leads the researcher to delve into the purpose behind participants’ interpretive accounts of ‘reality’: their figured worlds. Focusing on the ‘struggle’ within utterances guided my analysis to explore how the men in my study, as agentic beings, were able to reconstruct their identities through authorship, drawing on and orchestrating different ‘voices’ or ideas that are full of “‘lived’ beliefs and judgements” (Sullivan, 2012:5). Focusing on authorship brought attention to how they mediate the voices that stem from dominant gender discourse and assumptions that construct hegemonic masculinity.

In summary, dialogism as a method for researching dialogue is effective as “Meaning is always for someone, it could be for a participant within a situation, or for an outsider, such as a researcher, interpreting the situation” (Gillespie and Cornish, 2014: 436). Dialogism allowed me to ask how my participants were engaged in dialogue with the world around them and how this engagement helped them gain a sense of who they are. From this methodological position, I was able to recognise and interpret the dialogic relations they exhibited between their ‘I-for-myself’, ‘I-for-others’ and ‘others-for-me’ (Bakhtin, 1981).

#### 4.4 Coming to know yourself differently: Reflexivity and Positionality

My paradigm position questions the existence of objectivity in qualitative research (Mason, 1996; Litchman 2013; Bryman, 2012), although to ensure accountability and rigour, reflexivity and reflection was a necessity. The importance of reflexivity – coming



to know yourself differently – supported the exploration of the figured worlds of my participants and helped to hone the questions that needed answering. I was able to direct focus to important questions: “How have my background, concerns and interests affected the research at various stages? How else could this research be carried out? How might the data be interpreted differently? How have I changed in the light of this experience?” Litchman (2013:161). These questions engage the researcher in a reflection on personal beliefs and values about the process of research, illuminating bias (Litchman, 2013), and establishing ‘ethnographic authority’ (Britzman, 1995:229, cited in Pillow, 2003). Duffy & Bowe (2014:1) concur, stating:

Researchers should pay careful attention to highlighting what assumptions they bring to research and critically examine these assumptions to ensure a justifiable alignment between the perspective they bring to their work, the questions they ask and the methods employed. They should be revealed rather than remain tacit and undisclosed, particularly in social science research.

Pillow (2003) argues that problemising the above implications of researcher impact on data necessitates a recognition of self but also a recognition of the ‘Other’, supporting my use of dialogism as a method to understand data. This does not mean that my previous judgements and values are deleted through acknowledgement of researcher assumptions, instead it suggests a recognition of the researcher as a participant in the research dialogue, an additional ‘voice’ to consider, however discomfoting this may be. Drawing on Bakhtin, Hong et al. (2017) note that it is important to question the role of researchers, as they are always a participant in the research dialogue pursuing new understanding through “their own already formed view, from [their] own viewpoint, from [their] own position” (Bakhtin, 1986, cited in Hong et al. 2017:22). They acknowledge that there may be a struggle between the researcher’s own experiences and seeing the world through the eyes of the participants. According to Hong et al. (2017), the tension between past, present and future responses in relation to the data creates something new that adds value to the research. Reflexivity has enabled me to consider the complexities of ‘voices’ that myself and my participants are being addressed by and responding to.

## 4.5 My 'history-in-person'

My identity as a teacher educator was critical to this qualitative research. The importance of knowing as much as possible about the context of the research is crucial (Litchman, 2013; Gillespie and Cornish, 2014). Developing a 'thick description' needs an awareness of the situated meanings within the language being analysed, as this will ensure a more plausible interpretation (Gillespie and Cornish, 2014). This highlights the importance of my tutor role but also my 'history-in-person' (Holland et al. 1998:46) partly developed from my experiences of being a primary teacher, recruiting and working alongside both male and female teachers. Many times when discussing my research, colleagues and friends were keen to share their own stories about male primary teachers. These historical viewpoints, situated within the context of both teacher training and primary teaching, are brought to the present as an "an untidy compilation of perspectives" (Holland et al., 1998:46).

It is important to note, that the researcher-participant relationship and our identities are never finalised as we are constantly engaged in anticipating and responding to others' responses (Frank, 2005). However, as Fecho and Meacham (2007) assert, tensions between researcher and participants are not always problematic. From an alternative viewpoint, it is a collaborative development of both parties. Burdick and Sandlin (2010) agree, drawing on Bakhtin's notion of 'addressivity', they encourage researchers to be answerable to the relations between themselves and their participants. They suggest a sometimes uncomfortable but worthwhile process of examining the differences between the researcher and the researched in relation to cultural values and experience and the impact tensions may have on data analysis.

Barbour and Schostak (2011) suggest that the use of 'emergent strategies' within research methods helps researchers to develop the 'sense of the real'. They consider that this 'sense' comes from developing an understanding of the power structures in the exchange between interview and interviewee and their comparative social positions. Using emergent strategies allows for an 'emergence of voices' of those living the reality. However, a Bakhtinian lens brings focus to more than the power differentials between participant and researcher. It directs focus to all the responses made to past, present

and future utterances that bring meaning to the self and environment, albeit some may relate to power and position.

I understood, however, that as an interpretivist I needed to take account of the impact of positionality when collecting research data. I was initially concerned that the power differentials between myself, as a university tutor, and my participants, as student teachers, would limit how much they shared with me. One way I endeavoured to counteract the impact of power and positional differences in limiting the collection of data was through planning and carrying out a longitudinal study. Getting to know my participants over a number of years helped to develop a rapport between us. Initially, I attempted to break down any communication barriers by ensuring the meaning and interpretations of the interview data was open and truthful as possible, sharing these with them after each stage of the analysis. Asking them to comment and feedback on my analysis of their experiences led to an opportunity to co-construct the interpretations.

Acknowledging the importance of my history-in-person brought meaning to the initial feedback I had from my supervisory team about my analysis. They highlighted an underlying negativity in how I was interpreting my participants' language. This led me to consider where this negativity was stemming from. I started to question my position as an ITT Tutor, an ex-primary teacher, and a female researcher, recognising that some of the initial opinions expressed by the male primary teachers in this study had produced a defensive reaction within my analysis.

I was aware that it might seem surprising that I was a female researcher carrying out research about men. O'Keefe (2017) notes the tension that exists between the number of male researchers and the number of female teachers, suggesting that this imbalance adds to the unequal power relations in research production. My positioning as a female researcher felt entirely different from my position as a female primary teacher. I was engaged in social activity within a figured world where I had very little status as a doctoral female researcher, conducting social relations with male teachers who were self-authoring as more powerful and privileged than their teaching status may suggest.

This may have contributed to my defensive stance taken during my initial interpretations of the data.

As I needed to recognise how my own experiences may be influencing how I was 'reading' my participants' stories of practice, I acknowledged that within this research I was part of the dialogical process. As such, my position shifted alongside theirs. Not only have they progressed from being student teachers to Newly-Qualified Teachers (NQTs) to more experienced primary teachers but also the dialogic nature of the relationship we developed together has altered our positions. With time and experience, I was becoming more comfortable in the figured world of research, shifting in how I was self-authoring as a researcher. In turn, I became more open to alternative interpretations of the data.

Having recognised that our 'interview identities' altered over time, I consciously planned a return to our previous discussions each time we met. This helped create 'deep friendly talk' (Wrengraf, 2001), rather than a formal interview situation. It also created an opportunity for my participants to develop a dialogical relationship with the data, responding and answering both their own historical interpretations and my interpretations of their figured world. I practiced self-disclosure (Litchman, 2013) to help establish connections between us, openly discussing my own experiences in primary schools. I hoped my willingness to share my own stories would help remove any feelings of constraint my participants' felt in sharing their own experiences. Finally, operationalising my theoretical framework for data analysis not only brought focus to how these male primary teachers were orchestrating the 'voices' from their experiences but also gave direction to the interpretation of responses in relation to my own positional identities: as a tutor, a researcher, and a woman.

## 4.6 Practicalities of research: Who? What? Where? When?

### 4.6.1 Who?

I had in mind that I would be restricted in the depth of analysis I achieved if I had a large sample size (Goodrick, 2014) and as there is no specification in sample size for

qualitative research (Bryman, 2012), I focused on the need to gain close involvement with my participants and their interpretations of identities (Crouch and McKenzie, 2006). A small sample size of seven men enabled me to generate fine-grained data and was a sensible and realistic use of my resources, as I collected data from three rounds of interviews over the course of three years.

As an ITT Tutor, I had direct access to a relatively large number of student teachers making this aspect of the research straightforward. To recruit participants, I made final year primary education students aware of the study, asking them, via a generic email, to contact me if they were interested in taking part and fitted the criteria. Initially, I wanted to interview final year undergraduate students as they had already made a four-year commitment to teaching through their choice of degree. A choice that I wanted to explore with them in this research. I also assumed that they would have more school-based experiences informing their history-in-person than a student who had chosen the one-year postgraduate teacher training route.

I was quick to develop some flexibility around this however, when a university colleague suggested two specific NQTs who they believed would be very keen to take part in the study, one having chosen the PGCE route into teaching. These participants broadened the selection of male primary teachers as they were already one year ahead of the others in terms of their teaching career and provided a wider set of experiences within the data set. Bringing these participants into the data set is an example of convenience sampling (Patton, 2002; Suri, 2011) and although Patton (2002) indicates that this sampling strategy is the least effective, the approach brought an extra dimension to the data set, producing both interesting and relevant data.

It is pertinent to explore reasons why the majority of the participants self-selected. It is noticeable that all of them were white British, with the majority choosing not to go into teaching straight from school or college. It may be that in responding positively to the call for participants, they felt that they had more experience to share due to their varied initial career choices. There was a distinct lack of diversity in terms of race and ethnicity amongst the participants. However, it may be that they positioned themselves as the 'right kind' of primary teacher – white, male and heterosexual – what Skelton (2007:

684) calls a 'tightly proscribed identity found in Government, media and public discourse', reflecting gendered 'truths' that produce power and status (Martino, 2008; Skelton, 2007; Francis, 2008a). Moreover, this positioning may have led them to feel more comfortable and confident in sharing their teaching journeys. Although the participants were similar in terms of race, ethnicity and social class, employing my particular theoretical framework to guide my analysis of the data meant that I was able to highlight the multiple, diverse dimensions in their individual 'selves-in-practice'. Their dialogic identities go beyond the discursive productions of an embodied self, taking into account both the structural and the local in exploring what it means to be a male primary teacher.

Ryan had chosen to leave school at 16, working alongside his father in a 'manual labour job'. After a number of years working in this environment, he was made redundant for a second time, which led him to 'take stock of where he was going' as a 'family man', making a choice to 'embark on primary teaching'. His school placements were mostly in socially and ethnically diverse areas of the city close to the university.

Nick also left school at 16 but, unlike Ryan, went into managerial work, becoming 'very successful' at 'sales management'. After being made redundant in a job where he was 'Doing same old, same old. Working my guts out to line someone else's pockets', Nick looked to change his career to do something that 'would make him happy'. After volunteering in a local primary school, where he 'loved it', he chose to do an access course and then a 4-year primary teaching degree. His school-based placements were in a number of small semi-rural primary schools in affluent areas where the majority of the pupils were white British.

Tony had chosen to specialise in Early Years (0-4 years), after having some work experience in a local Early Years setting. Tony's school-based placements were in a number of small semi-rural primary schools where the majority of pupils were white British. After failing his second year placement, he took 'a year out' and got a job in a private nursery, which he returned to once he had completed his degree.

Chris was a sports specialist and had already secured his NQT post when I first met him. Before starting his degree, he had a career in retail but wanted 'something that had prospects' where he could 'apply himself better'. Through gaining experience as a volunteer helper in a primary school, he took an access course that enabled him to train to become a primary teacher. His school-based placements varied in size and socio-economic diversity. His first teaching post was in a larger than average primary school in a socially diverse area. Ofsted graded the school as 'Outstanding'.

Mark, like Chris, was also a sports specialist. Like the aforementioned participants, he had also left school at 16, having secured a scholarship at a local football club. After a number of injuries, his contract was not renewed, leading him to join a sports education company that taught PE in primary schools. After a few years, he wanted more of 'the classroom side of it', and applied for primary teacher training. When I first met Mark, he was working as an NQT in a small semi-rural primary school, graded as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted, where the majority of pupils were from affluent families. Within the period of this study, Mark moved schools, having secured a new job in a small fee-paying school.

Craig decided to teach in primary schools when he was at high school and applied to do teacher training from college. His mother was a primary teacher and had gone to the same university to train to teach. His school-based placements varied in size and socio-economic diversity. Craig secured his first job in a small primary school that was situated in a socially diverse location. This school had a 'Good' Ofsted grade.

Leo was an NQT when I first met him, choosing to apply for the one-year Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) once he had completed his undergraduate degree. His school-based placements were contrasting, one being a small primary school in a rural location, the other larger and situated in a socially and ethnically diverse area. Leo had been unable to secure a permanent post as an NQT and so had been working with a number of supply agencies. He had taken supply work in a variety of primary schools all over the North West.

I felt privileged over the time of this study to be able to become part of their professional development, finding out how they were progressing in their chosen career and what

experiences and choices they had made in the year between our meetings. Over time, and as the rapport between us developed, I realised that I had been extremely fortunate to have such an interesting and varied group of teachers. Unfortunately, I was unable to keep contact with Ryan and Nick. I had initially used email to contact my participants, although they had shared their mobile numbers at our first meeting. I heard nothing from them using both means of communication a number of times prior to the second round of interviews. This was disappointing as both participants had interesting stories to tell. I did attempt to contact them both again during the final round of interviews, hoping that they had changed their mind, but they did not reply. The final interview with Tony was also unable to go ahead but for a very different reason. He had informed me at the end of our second meeting that he was leaving teaching and going back to university to retrain. I was able to gather important data from Tony during this second meeting, although it did mean that he had removed himself from the sample, as his new career path was outside the dimensions of interest of my research (Patton, 2002).

#### 4.6.2 What?

Having a multi-case design enabled me to use a generic purposive sampling approach (Bryman, 2012) where the criteria for selection of participants were fixed and a priori (early career male primary teachers and male primary trainee teachers). The research questions informed the selection criteria and helped identify appropriate cases and participants. I fully informed each participant of the research focus and the chosen methods.

#### Where and When?

Dowling and Brown (2010) assert that decisions relating to the location and timings of data collection are important in order to minimise any effects of the setting and to generate the most insightful data. I was aware that I needed to not only choose a mutually agreed location but one that was private and quiet (Litchman, 2012). Holding most of the meetings in teaching rooms at the university where I worked was effective as they were a quiet place to meet – at the end of the summer term – and a familiar location for all concerned. Chris had wanted to meet at the school where he was working



for the one of the interviews, which I agreed to, as I wanted it to go ahead. I felt that, unfortunately, the location compromised this interview as other members of staff disturbed us on a number of occasions. Additionally, there were times within this interview where Chris notably altered the direction of his narrative or it lacked detail due to the sensitive nature of the topic. Undoubtedly, his chosen location influenced his responses. To ensure that this did not happen again, I was less flexible with location of his final interview. Off the record, he acknowledged that a university teaching room was a better place to talk and his final interview was both interesting and detailed. Making a number of suggestions of timings during the months of June-July, meant more flexibility for my participants as I was aware that they would have busy work schedules. The time of year chosen for interviews was deliberate as it provided an opportunity for them to reflect on the majority of the academic year, offering a time and space for this reflection (Appendix 3). Timings also provided an opportunity for my initial data analysis to inform the subsequent round of data collection. This iterative strategy strengthened the links between theory and research in my study. The weaving between theoretical and empirical spheres throughout my research process increased sensitivity towards specific factors that supported my interpretations of my participants' experiences within the figured world, which in turn helped tighten up my research questions.

### 4.6.3 Ethics and confidentiality

A number of ethical issues must be addressed when undertaking case studies (Goodrick 2014). These I kept in mind throughout the research process using the University's Academic Ethical Framework and the University's Guidelines on Good Research Practice as guidance. In this section, I focus on two main areas: ethical principles and ethical quality.

#### 4.6.4.1 Ethical principles

Diener and Crandall (1978, cited in Bryman, 2012:135) have helpfully broken ethical principles down into four key points:

- whether there is harm to participants;

- whether there is a lack of informed consent;
- whether there is an invasion of privacy;
- whether deception is involved.

I concluded that my gathering of data would not cause any undue harm to my participants, as the chosen research method would enable them to have the freedom to direct their own responses. I was aware of the need for both individual and institutional privacy within my study in order to ‘minimize disturbance’ both to my participants and in ‘their relationships with their environment’ (SRA Ethical Guidelines). This was difficult when wanting to create a ‘thick description’, although the longitudinal nature of my research provided the opportunity to gather rich data.

Anonymity of both my participants and of any other teachers, tutors and schools was maintained using pseudonyms. I followed Goodrick’s (2014) suggestion of removal or modification of any detail that was not essential to the understanding of the data in order to protect their identities. This included any personal information discussed during the interviews. Completing a Data Protection Audit (Appendix 4) became part of protecting their confidentiality. Developing an awareness of confidential storing and use of data was important (Holmes, 2004), so their names and contacts were never stored on my hard drive – but kept separate from any other data, and data files identified through codes. Pseudonyms were always in use in any transcriptions and further writing and any hard copies kept secure. I repeatedly reminded my participants at the start of every interview that discussions were confidential. Pseudonyms would be used for any names in the data and gave them an opportunity to speak off the record, which some of them chose to take. I always asked them if they felt they had been able to discuss what they wanted freely and had taken time at the end of the interview to share my next steps in the research – establishing further connections with them in acknowledging their part in the process and my role as a research student. Again, there was always a positive reaffirmation of the openness and nature of the process being potentially beneficial for them, acknowledged by Tony after his initial interview:

*I didn’t realise that I thought that anyway, [given time to discuss thoughts within the interview]. It has made me think...I found it interesting.*

Obtaining informed consent from my participants was relatively straightforward. I used a Study Information sheet (Appendix 5), alongside an informal meeting so that they could make an informed decision as to whether they wanted to take part in the study. The two participants that were NQT's had this information via email and a discussion took place over the telephone prior to them giving their consent as they were both working in schools and so had more restrictions on their time. I also asked each of them to sign an interview consent form (Appendix 6) in order to have a record of informed consent if any concerns were raised as the study progressed. These again, I kept secure. Considering the issue of power relations and my seemingly more powerful position as a University Tutor, I ensured that each of them understood that they could withdraw from the study at any time, hoping to lessen any pressure to continue with the study. At the end of every interview, I asked whether they would like to continue in the research. Ryan and Nick, who did choose to opt out after the first year, had been willing to repeat the experience immediately after their initial interview, but the longitudinal nature of the study meant that they had time to reconsider.

#### *4.6.4.2 Ethical quality*

Following the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)'s Research Ethics Framework guidance (2015) any research should be "designed, reviewed and undertaken to ensure integrity and quality". Dowling and Brown (2010) assert that there is no simple formulae to measure ethical quality although Bryman (2012) hints at researchers more than likely needing to defend the quality of their sample chosen, research questions and methodology, including research method, on both ethical and technical grounds. With this in mind, the ethical quality of this research is demonstrated through a number of ethical decisions made over the course of the study. In addition to the chosen ethical procedures that guided data collection and dissemination, I was able to pilot my chosen methodological tool (semi-structured interview questions) with a group of Postgraduate Primary male students prior to submitting my research proposal to the University Ethics Committee. This was an opportunity to ensure that my questions were unobtrusive and sensitive to my chosen sample of male primary teachers (Piper and Simons, 2011).

Following on, I drew up an interview guide (Appendix 7) that circumvented a fixed order of semi-structured questions. Instead, I was able to explore my participants' stories whilst encouraging them to provide direction of the interview. I wanted them "to speak freely in their own terms", about their experiences as male primary teachers (Lofland and Lofland 1995:85, cited in Burn, 2006). I also balanced their rights with the responsibility for generating public knowledge through adhering to the ethical principles outlined above and at the same time producing an in-depth study of their experiences that gives direction to future developments of university and school-based support for male primary teachers and student teachers.

As part of my ethical considerations, my participants had the opportunity to comment on the analysis of their interview, which brought together multiple views of the data, rather than "it falling into sterile, totalitarian monologue" (Schostak, 2002:63). This developing complexity of interacting views brought depth and understanding to meanings and interpretations, adding extra 'value' to the data as it was indicative of the reality of their experiences in the figured world. Sharing the analysis developed the rapport between us both as they saw how data analysis was not something that would cause them harm, emotionally, professionally or otherwise. It also demonstrated to them that I was 'really listening' to their narratives and their stories were considered purposeful.

#### 4.7 Gathering data: research interviews

I recognised the importance of my participants' 'emergent voices' when deciding which methods of data collection would be most appropriate. Bryman (2012) asserts that within a multi-case qualitative study, there can be a narrow focus on the contrast of findings. Not to be overtaken by this principle, and reflecting my interpretive stance, an open-ended position was maintained in this study through the use of semi-structured interviews, rejecting the use of structured interviews as a method, which may create an asymmetrical relationship between participants and researcher (Bryman, 2012). This is also true of the participant observation method, as I was aware that my position as an ITT Tutor might have had a reactive effect and as such influence the social reality I was observing. The use of semi-structured interviews encouraged a flexibility of response

from my participants, providing a fairer and fuller representation of their narratives and at the same time reflecting the need for specificity to generate data that go toward answering the research questions. Mason (1996) notes that, as interviews are a common method to use when carrying out qualitative research there is an assumption that they are the only choice of the researcher. However, it was clear that my chosen method helped answer my research questions as it enabled me to explore my participants' experiences and responses to their experiences in a legitimate way.

#### 4.7.4 Semi-structured interviews

Freebody (2003:130) argues that qualitative interviews can be “deceptively complex” as they facilitate a comprehensive investigation of issues alongside a personal connection with the researcher in the gathering of data. Wrengraf (2001:4) adds to this argument in the suggestion that research interviews bring a better understanding of reality if the researcher takes the position that suspects the most recent account of reality is a fiction needing further clarification. Thus, using semi-structured interviews helped me to ask questions that narrated my participants' reality – the experiences of the male primary teachers in the figured world. Moreover, semi-structured interviews bring further understanding of the social world as they combine “heavily and light structured questions” (Ibid, p.5), and are guided throughout by the theoretical framework with the aim of answering the research questions. As Freebody asserts, this means semi-structured interviews combine the best of both worlds, as there is an understanding that core points need to be a focus with the flexibility to probe and prompt to guide data collection (p. 133).

Interviews create a specific account of social realities only at a snapshot moment in time. The data collected delivers an insight into individual construction and understanding of these social worlds within the setting of the interview. Hence, “Interviews provide, as a social interaction, visible accounts of teaching, learning, childhood, adulthood, expertise, competence, apprentice and all the rest” (Garfinkel, 1967, cited in Freebody, 2003:168). Freebody continues by concluding that the interview is a particular version of truth – an example of how participants tell the “truth-for-then-and-there” (p.168).

With these points in mind, I was able to recognise interviews as a particular sociocultural and historical practice, a specific version of social reality. Consequently, this led me to an understanding that the data gathered in my study reveals how the male primary teachers in this study engage and interact within both the primary school and the interview itself. For Mason (1996), the particular interaction between the researcher and participant during the interview means the method generates – rather than collects – data, reflecting the notion of a co-construction of data by both parties, each actively involved in the production of knowledge.

When analysing the data it was important to recognise that the interview experience and the talk generated from it reveals the participant's own and others' identities that may differ from context to context. Significantly, for Wrengraf (2001:18), a positive interview experience creates a safe space for participants to evoke their "secret unwritten history and potential 'interview identities'". The influences of any potential 'interview identities' that I and these male primary teachers brought to each meeting were then part of the data collection process and any shift in 'interview identities' throughout each interview or over the course of the study, became part of the data analysis.

Wrengraf (2001) advises that, in order to make the interview safe, there needs to be a recognition of current social positioning of both researcher and participant. With this in mind, my participants' "what-I-am-for-this-interview" identity (Freebody, 2003:148), was used as a resource for situating their interviews and clarifying the focus. The focus and aim of my study was shared with them during recruitment, acknowledging that they are the "object of curiosity" (Ibid, p.152), and so particular gender productions and performances may have been at the forefront of their responses. With this in mind, I was mindful of creating open questions, and guided by my theoretical framing I focused on their interpretations of their daily experiences. Freebody (2003:153) notes that this can lead to the 'mundane' being made 'exotic' as within the process of describing relatively ordinary occurrences, everyday things are rendered 'curious' through the probing and encouragement of interviewer. It was pleasing to note that any reference to gender issues emerged naturally in my participants' narratives and thus, I felt there

was very little need to address the subject of gender explicitly in every interview (Appendix 7).

To ensure that I created a 'safe space' for the interviews, the questions chosen were purposefully informal, conversational and covered a range of topics, rather than consisting of a list of questions. As research questions are "contextual, situational and interactional" (Mason, 1996: 57), I needed a flexible approach to gathering data. Thus, I was always prepared to adapt my questioning to ensure I demonstrated sensitivity towards each participant. I used Dowling and Brown's (2010) suggestion of taking cues from participants' responses as to what to ask next, as this process produces data that is specific and detailed to each participant. This meant that I had a set of guiding questions that were based on addressing my research questions, but with the flexible nature of my semi-structured interviews, I knew that I had to "think on my feet" (Ibid, p. 43) as a researcher and direct the conversation to ensure that the social interaction was generating relevant data.

Over time, I started to note down particular points as my participants were talking. I could then return to these later in the interview, providing an opportunity for them to expand on what they initially had said and helping me to address my research questions. It was tricky to keep a balance between 'active listening' and making mental reminders to return to specific interesting points, especially as many of their responses were lengthy and detailed due to my open-ended questioning. If, after transcribing, I felt that I had missed an opportunity to explore an answer in more depth or an element of the research questions remained unanswered, I noted this for the next round of interviews. This process, acknowledged by Wrengraf (2001) and Mason (1996), is more challenging, as the researcher has to juggle many tasks at once. Wrengraf suggests that a researcher carrying out semi-structured interviews needs mental preparation pre-interview; to be able to use discipline and creativity during the interview; and needs to set aside more time for analysis and interpretation post-interview. This meant that although the number of participants I interviewed was small, my choice to conduct semi-structured interviews over a number of years meant the data collection process was lengthy. However, the data gathered was rich and focused on individual experiences, which provided answers to my research questions.

#### 4.7.5 The interview process

With the points above guiding my interview procedures, I planned sessions that were as comfortable for my participants as possible. Time for each interview was flexible to enable them to feel unhurried and allow them space to expand on points without constraint. This was noticeable in each interview, as when they were drawing to a close they chose to add to their points previously covered or chose a new direction to go in. Creating a 'safe space' meant that I had a "warm up period" (Dowling and Brown, 2012:81) – time spent in informal conversation to ensure my participants felt at ease – reminding them also of the confidentiality agreement between us. In order to achieve a good balance between talking and listening there were many times where I only used affirmations or asked for an example/illustration in order to encourage them to go into more detail, rather than interrupting their thought processes. This meant that the interview became more of a "guided conversation" (Mason, 1996:52), where I understood the need for probes and silences in order to demonstrate I was 'actively listening', recognising that a silence may not be the end of what is being said and with non-verbal prompts my participants could continue with their narratives. Moreover, if they struggled at first to answer any of the interview questions, I used non-specific phrases so not to influence their narrative, such as: 'Can you remember an example of this? Do you remember/recall anything else?' The intention was that there was no rush to answer each question or to move onto the next. I was developing what Wrengraf (2001:198) calls, a researcher's capacity for "deep listening to yourself" and a participant's capacity for "deep listening to themselves".

Finally, I wanted to ensure that the interview always ended effectively by asking my participants if there was anything important we had not yet covered. This ensured that the data was relevant and valid (Barbour and Schostak, 2012). To close the interview clearly, I clarified the next steps of the research and asked if they were still willing to be part of the study. They constantly showed an interest in how my research was progressing and many times referred back to their own studies, carried out whilst they were student teachers. I believe their positive connection with the research process played a part in maintaining their involvement in the study. I always thanked them for



their time and energy they were committing to this research, recognising their openness within their storytelling.

#### 4.7.6 The heteroglossic interview

As Bakhtin's dialogism guided my research design, it also framed my choice of method. Applying a Bakhtinian lens to the research interview, Tanggaard (2009) suggests that the language within interviews is not static as it consists of a number of diverse voices spoken by others in different contexts. As such "Interviewing people provides a context for revealing how language 'makes' people, produces and changes social life" (Tanggaard, 2009:1499). This meant that interviews can be conceptualised as dialogic as they give voice to recognisable discourses of particular figured worlds. Through the application of Bakhtin's ideas to research interviews, Tanggaard (2009) argues that interviews are always polyphonic, "replete with the use of many voices, words, and discourses that structure the conversation" (p. 1499). Importantly, recognition that the myriad of polyphonic dialogues produce knowledge about personal narratives and social life enabled me to explore in depth how these male primary teachers negotiate the multiple voices that exist within the figured world of primary school.

Tanggaard (2009) asserts that dialogism enables the researcher to consider the stories told in interviews as performed between the self and the other and as such, the meaning is never completely personal or public but lies somewhere in-between. Gillespie and Cornish (2014) agree clarifying that meaning is not embedded within the utterance:

Rather it is found in the relation between the utterance and the broad context, including the participants. Meaning is always for someone, it could be for a participant within the situation, or for an outsider, such as a researcher, interpreting the situation (p. 436).

For Tanggaard (2009:1501), the language spoken in interviews articulates a plethora of meanings. Moreover, this 'multivoicedness' means that "There is no one stable and true story to be told about participants in an interview study". Gillespie and Cornish (2014:436) concur, asserting that utterances, viewed through this lens, are "deeply dialogical" as they are at once, embodied and socially situated, receptive and disputed, distinctive and universal. Their points bring implications for my analysis, as they allow

me to acknowledge that the stories my participants tell me cannot be summarised neatly into a single viewpoint. Instead, I am able to direct a focus to the different voices ‘ventriloquating’ their stories, recognising that interviews are a dialogic encounter. These voices, drawn from different discourses, frame their narratives and provide information about what is important in their daily life. Moreover, individual responses recorded within a single interview are not representative of a single language, instead, as Tanggaard (2009:1506) asserts, the spoken word represents “the transmission and mediation of past, present, and sometimes conflicting discourses that are given embodied and social form in an interview”.

The importance of the interview as a space for the “social creation of meaning and personal narratives” (Tanggaard, 2009:1505) and the dialogic interactions that take place within this space can be located within Bakhtin’s own words:

In order to assess and divine the real meaning of other’s words in everyday life, the following are surely of decisive significance: who precisely is speaking, and under what concrete utterances?...and the entire speaking situation is very important: who is present during it, and with what expression or mimicry is it uttered, with what shades of intonation? (Bakhtin, 1981:341)

In order to explore the meaning of what is being said, directed by Bakhtin’s point, my analysis focused on both the context of the interview itself and the social, cultural and historical context that framed my participants’ utterances. Meaning – viewed through my theoretical lens – situates qualitative data methods within the social context and dialogical frame, providing focus on the messiness of the lived reality of ‘language-in-context’ (Gillespie and Cornish, 2014). Dialogical framing of research methods recognises that meaning also comes from the ‘mouths of others’ (Bakhtin, 1981), from how words have been used previously, presently and in the future. Importantly, meaning is always ‘for someone’, as we are always in the process of being addressed (Gillespie and Cornish, 2014).

These points help conceptualise interviewing as a shared dialogical event and recognises that creation of meaning occurs through local and personal interpretations, rooted in the social and formed within the landscape of heteroglossia. Bakhtin’s dialogism reveals the intricacies of the researcher-participant relationship, highlighting the transitional

nature of the interview space, where both people are involved in the process of anticipating and responding to others' answers. Researchers and participants – when viewed through my theoretical lens – are always in the process of becoming. Both involved in the shaping of each other. Data gathered from interviews are therefore immersed in the social, cultural and historical realm, bringing forth different meanings and illuminating the complexities of relations between past, present and future utterances (Tanggaard, 2009).

From this perspective, interviews are the context for creation of 'multivoiced' knowledge about the social world and the participants' place within it. In addition, this knowledge is coproduced, clarifying my earlier point that interpretative research is never objective. Even if I refrain from asking too many questions or I encourage my participants to talk uninterrupted for a long period within the interview, meanings about the world are coproduced dialogically (Tanggaard, 2009). This occurs via their narratives – shaped through the orchestration of numerous voices that vocally evoke particular figured worlds – and the knowledge created between the participant and researcher within the social situation of the interview. The 'multivoicedness' of interviews also substantiate my choice of a small number of participants. Within each individual response there are many identifiable voices and authors. This means that my data analysis can still identify dominant and alternative discourses relating to men teaching in primary schools in the voices that are addressing my participants and within their individual replies. Interviews, as an example of an environment of heteroglossia, illustrate the point made by Tanggaard (2009:1512), that they do not only reveal one single, coherent narrative of self, instead they illuminate the numerous voices spoken by participants, which "cross, fuel, or constrain one another".

## 4.8 Data analysis

Having carried out semi-structured interviews with my participants over three years I understandably accumulated a great deal of data that needed analysing, interpreting and presenting. This process was demanding and time-consuming but the most rewarding. Carrying out the data analysis, from interview transcription to drawing out initial themes and moving onto a more structured analysis, guided by my theoretical

framework, became the 'rupture', or my 'turning point' in being and becoming a researcher. Although there were many times where I doubted my ability to complete my thesis – constantly worrying that my work was not academic or complex enough – my repeated return to my data led me to tell my participants' stories simply and with more confidence. I now set out my approach to data analysis, from my initial application of Gee's (2012) "Ideal' discourse analysis', used with my first round of data, to operationalising the theory and the application of a Bakhtinian approach to data analysis, to the final write up stage of this thesis.

"Language does something" (Tanggaard, 2009:1499). It produces something in both the social world and in the immediate interaction between people (Antaki, 2008). It makes visible both global social action, such as dominant gender discourses highlighted by research reviewed in Chapter 2, and local social action, such as interactions within the figured world of the primary school and interactions within the interview itself. This visibility occurs through language, hence the compatibility of discourse analysis as a method to analyse the data in this study. There is recognition that discourse analysis has many variants (Antaki, 2008, Keller, 2013) and, as a first-time researcher with a large amount of data generated from the first of three interviews, I needed some guidance and structure as to how to begin my data analysis.

As with other forms of analysis, it is important to use the original transcript when conducting discourse analysis (Keller, 2013). Unfortunately, apart from this point there seems to be little practical guidance available as to how to conduct discourse analysis. As Muncie (2006: 75) notes:

It is easier to trace the theoretical underpinnings of discourse analysis than to identify and describe the formal processes of actually carrying out such research. This is partly due to the often intuitive and reflexive nature of the skills involved.

Helpfully, Harding (2015:22) has identified a series of simple steps for the first-time user of discourse analysis. These stages first ascertain themes, before delving into the language used that conceptualises these themes:

1. Read the transcripts.

2. Identify themes in the data.
3. Identify the language that is used to construct each theme.
4. Identify commonalities in the use of language in relation to the construction of each theme.

These steps clarified how to begin my data analysis, and the work of Gee (2012:121) and his ‘Ideal’ discourse analysis’ added detail and further structure. He advocates the use of ‘seven building tasks and six tools of inquiry’ that relate to the role of context in language use. These building tasks and tools of inquiry direct focus to shared cultural knowledge and assumptions that helps researchers develop a greater understanding of meanings within language use. Gee’s ‘Ideal’ discourse analysis’ generates 42 interrelated questions that can be used to interrogate any data. These range from questioning the significance of situated meanings, social languages and ‘big C Conversations’ (public discourses) to exploring how ‘big D Discourses’ (distinctive ways of saying, doing and being), activities and identities are enacted within context. Gee proposes that using his range of questions to interrogate discourse bring a greater understanding of the ‘bigger picture’. However, he does recognise that answering 42 questions in relation to each set of data produced, constitutes a very lengthy analysis and that is why it is an ‘ideal’ discourse analysis. With this in mind, I decided to use some of the more relevant 42 questions to begin to analyse the first round of interview transcripts (Appendix 8). The questions guided the analysis to key words and phrases in the data and enabled me to ask what situated meanings these words and phrases have, the implications they had in describing the figured worlds of my participants, and which social languages, Discourses and Conversations (Gee, 2012) appear relevant. Answering these questions and reflecting on these answers, brought attention to areas of convergence, leading to highlighting some important figures and activities that they were describing.

This ‘ideal’ discourse analysis provided the structure and support I needed in those early days of data analysis but left me wanting to understand how these male primary teachers were commenting on and making sense of their own and others’ social positioning. I also felt that my initial analysis overlooked references to how they

described possibilities of mediating agency. Taking a more dialogical approach and through operationalising my theoretical framework, I was able to gain deeper understanding of how they were mediating agency in their accounts of being a teacher. I became much more aware that data analysis was not a case of simply extracting data from the interviews conducted and quoting what my participants told me as answers to my research questions. The operationalising of 'Figured worlds' theory kept the analysis focused, counteracting the messiness of research and adding value and rigour (Bryman, 2012).

In order for my analysis to add 'value', I ensured that it did not just paraphrase the words of others, but instead, examined what was being said or not said, using clear theoretical arguments outlined in Chapter 3, to draw conclusions (Antaki et al. 2002). Furthermore, the application of theory supported my interpretive stance to data analysis, as I was able to move beyond describing how these male primary teachers interpret the world around them, and instead give authority to the multiplicity of voices found within the data (Appendix 9). This process of returning to the data and exploring the complexities of the words found there aided my development as a researcher. Eventually, through immersing myself in the words of my participants I was able to find answers to my research questions.

## 5 Analysis one: The ‘Standard Plot’-Ryan’s story

The next four chapters focus on how my participants figured their worlds of work and their positions in it. I explore how they talk about the dominant gender discourses that operate within primary schools and the role these discourses play in their accounts of being a teacher. My analysis also demonstrates how their narratives reflect changes in how they figured the world and themselves over time.

Research within my literature review suggests that male primary teachers’ identities are discursively constrained by ‘common-sense’ assumptions about the ‘natural’ characteristics of male primary teachers that enable them to bring something unique to teaching by virtue of being men. Consequently, their identities are fixed within two choices of either ‘doing masculinity’ or being rendered ‘Other’. I have argued in the review that the focus on whether or not male primary teachers conform to gender-traditional identity performances leads to a recording of only binarised masculine performances, thus overlooking how individual agency of people may allow for alternative responses to how they might describe themselves and their position in school.

My analysis shows that all of the participants at one time or another described some discomfort and vulnerability in their accounts of being a primary teacher. Moreover, they juxtaposed their reports of uneasiness with stories that draw on recognisable hegemonic masculine discourses, positioning them with more power and status as men, reflecting current findings in the research field. However, some of the participants described feelings of discomfort in more privileged positions and did not accept them readily. Yet, as teachers at the early stages of their career, they struggled to mediate any alternative position. Furthermore, my analysis shows that their ideas of the teacher they want to be become nuanced with time and experience as they exercise some agency to improvise responses to the constraints of their particular context.

This first chapter relates to Ryan, who in his mid-30s had decided to make a career change and chose to train to be a primary teacher for four years. Ryan’s story typifies those found in current research. He struggles to fit into a world where others question

his practice and performance, although he is able to draw on dominant gender discourses to offset his lesser positioning as a student teacher, accepting these discourses without question. He describes strong emotions in finding himself within a context where he feels under-valued, under scrutiny and unable. In the following chapter, I focus on the stories of the other male primary teachers also at the start of their teaching careers. Additionally, they chose to tell me stories of struggling to fit in and the difficulties they have with their everyday practice in the classroom, sharing their vulnerability in learning to become a male primary school teacher. They also draw on dominant gender discourses as a response to their lesser positioning. However, unlike Ryan, they begin to recognise and contest the gender privilege and status that they may gain from being male.

Chapter 7 features the story of Tony who taught pre-school children. Unlike the other participants, Tony is unable to negotiate a comfortable position within his context and instead chooses to leave teaching. The final analysis chapter focuses on how my participants experienced life as more established male primary teachers. I explore the ways in which they have been able to adjust to the difficulties of their situation, arguing that they have, for the most part, successfully navigated a role for themselves that does not valorise stereotypical hegemonic masculine practices.

## 5.1 Setting the scene

In this chapter, I focus on Ryan's story as a student teacher battling to fit in and be accepted into the figured world of primary school. In my analysis of Ryan's account, I show how he draws on the dominant discourse of hegemonic masculinity to alleviate the discomfiture he experiences in being positioned by experienced teachers as inadequate and out of place. Eventually, his unquestioned adherence to recognisable masculine roles and performances ensures that others begin to accept him as a male primary teacher.

Ryan is a great storyteller. His interview as a final year student teacher begins with him talking about his journey into teaching. He contextualises his choice to train as a primary teacher within an account of having left school at the earliest opportunity, working in manual labour jobs, which he came to 'hate':



*The last few years of high school I got distracted and didn't do as well as I should have done...I left school at 16, started working for my dad and after 18 months I was made redundant...another place was offering manual labour work, which I didn't mind at the time, which I was quite happy doing. It was an opportunity...I went there straight away and was there for 8 years because I needed the money. I hated the, hated the, I don't know if I did, but now I look back at it...it was horrible, I can still smell it now. It stunk, it's disgusting. With starches and dust and horrible environments and noisy. And I had a friend that worked in a...factory and he used to tell us that he worked for 3 days a week and well, I thought that sounds good, I like the sound of that...I ended up getting a job there. I was there for 10 years. So fantastic hours and good pay but again I didn't want to be there when I was 50, I didn't want to be there when I was 40. It was not for me although in the meantime I got a mortgage and all the things that go with that so I was stuck in a rut so I wasn't going anywhere.*

Ryan's description of himself shifts from the carefree 16-year-old who was distracted at school, to someone who realises that they are in a factory job they do not like. His realisation of being 'stuck in a rut' is made more forceful in his repetition of the point that he 'didn't want to be there'. He seems to transport himself back to the factory where he once worked, evoking the smell of the place and his adverse reaction. His language choices demonstrate his strength of feeling about his previous working life. It is noticeable that Ryan's narrative evokes a typical hegemonic masculine working environment of hard manual work where extrinsic drivers – 'good pay' for 'fantastic hours' – directed him towards the standard trappings of conventional life with responsibilities such as: 'a mortgage and all the things that go with it'.

Ryan uses a 'wake-up call' storyline in the next part of his journey into teaching, describing when he decided to take up teaching as a career:

*R: They gave me the chance to be made redundant and they paid me a nice sum of money, which was fantastic and that was the turning point. It gave me the opportunity to take stock and chat to people that were important in my life and see where I was going with it. That's when I decided that I would embark on the opportunity. I had to get on the course by doing an access course and to look at doing primary school teaching. Unbelievable, unbelievable.*

*CW: Why do you say unbelievable?*

*R: Because if I look back to when I was at school and some of the reports that I got and everything, it's just like...they're probably right. The head teacher saying things that stand out like "If Ryan doesn't buck his ideas up*

*he will quite happily plod along in life”, which was a fair comment at the time...but for myself, my own pride that I’ve done it. Turned my life around in a lot of ways.*

Ryan’s account of his ‘current’ self illustrates a story that addresses and answers his previous Head teacher in a recalled dialogue from the past that positions him as incompetent. The phrases he uses, such as ‘turning point’, ‘take stock’ and ‘embarking on the opportunity’ enhances the dramatic imagery of Ryan, the hero, at the beginning of his quest to become a primary school teacher and ‘turn his life around’. In his account, there is a recognition that his Head teacher was probably right to position him as lazy but Ryan answers this voice by self-authoring as someone who has been able to steer his life in a new, positive direction. As such, his successful attempt to become a primary teacher is important to him, as it is symbolic of change in his authoring of the self.

## 5.2 Not fitting in: “You try your best not to upset anybody”

Despite Ryan’s obvious investment in making radical changes to his life course, much of his story focuses on the negative experiences he has with staff in schools during his training. After his explanation of how much he has invested in starting a new career, Ryan’s account of his experiences reference his criticism of the staff and their actions towards him that have gone to make his teacher training difficult: ‘We [students on placement] are just a pest to them’. Ryan clarifies his self-positioning further:

*I will always say that they are very, very busy people...‘I’ve got far more important things to do’...so much of a pecking order. Seats and all that. I’m sure that I’ve upset someone without even knowing. It’s difficult again but you’ve just got to try and be yourself. I remember when I was in year one, some students were not allowed in the staffroom. They had to eat their lunch in the car. Shocking isn’t it? Disgraceful!*

Ryan frames his criticism of the treatment he and other students received in school against the impact of teachers’ increasing workload. His account focuses on how he feels about the way schools deal with students and the difficulties of knowing the unspoken ‘rules’ of the staffroom as a student teacher. His criticisms suggest a pettiness from school staff in reference to staffroom ‘seats and all that’, and the unreasonable behaviour other students have experienced. These references help Ryan address his lesser positioning as a student teacher as he stories himself as someone above such unreasonable behaviour, commenting: ‘Shocking isn’t it? Disgraceful!’ Reinforcing his

self-positioning, Ryan juxtaposes the teachers' reprehensible behaviour with a description of his own, referencing a global notion of a teacher 'who wants to help every child':

*I've gone out of my way to ensure that I have a smile on my face, I'm pleasant to everybody. It doesn't matter who it is, the cleaners or whoever...I want to be seen as a positive, smiley, happy person who wants to help every child, doing the most that I can.*

Ryan's recollection of his own positive behaviour implies that despite his low status, he is able to act appropriately, unlike the teachers he described previously. Unfortunately, this positive version of self goes unrecognised, as 'others do not really acknowledge you'. Ryan continues:

*It was me that approached them, gave them a handshake. "Hello, I am Ryan, a student teacher." They never approach you to say, "Is there anything we can do? Hope you have a good placement."*

Ryan's account draws on the cultural symbol of a handshake to demonstrate his professional attitude to his teacher training that is in direct contrast to the teachers' approach, which he describes as: 'There you are, there's your classroom, get on with it'. Ryan stories himself as a professional teacher but the response he gets from school staff is not what he expects. He describes his position as not good enough to warrant a professional introduction, served as an illustration of how little interest others had in getting to know him.

### 5.3 Not fitting in: "I felt absolutely useless"

Much of Ryan's feeling of discomfort came from the problems he had in accepting the feedback about his practice in the classroom from more experienced teachers. Having storied himself as professional and out to be the best teacher he could be, Ryan described how he struggled to come to terms with his inadequacies in the classroom. He begins by telling me about an observation he had during his final year school placement. The teacher-mentor and university tutor were carrying out his observation:

*I felt, 'I'm not capable'...I thought the lesson had gone really well, it might not be outstanding, but it had gone really well...I thought, 'That's great, it's gone fine'...They said that it wouldn't have even been acceptable. It was awful. Pulled me up on lots of things. I thought, 'This is unbelievable.'*

Ryan describes how he came to realise that his previous self-authoring as a model student teacher was at odds with how others saw him. The language he uses emphasises how astonished and confused he felt in this situation at the time. He explains, with some incredulity, how his misjudgement of the situation left him with feelings of shock and bewilderment: 'Amazing how your own impression can be so wrong.'

What is important here is that Ryan is able to resist his positioning as inadequate in the classroom through his belief that the problems he experienced lay with his teacher-mentors. Just prior to telling the previous story, he describes a different teacher-mentor who did not complete observations of his lessons regularly: 'I just thought it wasn't fair...it's just that they were being done, not really useful, done the night before. It's a bit wishy-washy'. Although Ryan does not draw any explicit links between his description of the teacher-mentor and the incident of failure, what is implicit here, in the juxtaposition of his comments, is a proposal that the teacher-mentor's judgements are not properly founded on what Ryan actually does. Additionally, he describes feeling disgruntled with his teacher-mentor for not providing effective support and opportunities to help develop his teaching practice. As Ryan comes to the realisation that his practice is not good enough, previous experiences with teacher-mentors not doing their job properly become significant in helping him make sense of his positioning.

The theme of not having effective support from teacher-mentors continues in Ryan's recollections of important figures. He describes his final year teacher-mentor – an experienced male teacher – as both a 'cantankerous old man' and someone who: 'If you needed a voice to tell the kids off it was always him to be called. He made it all tick.' His words reflect recognisable gendered practices: the hegemonic masculine performance of the authoritarian male teacher in charge. Moreover, his description of his teacher-mentor is important in providing Ryan reasons as to why he was finding it difficult to be successful in school. His account of their relationship is emotive and full of feeling as he talks about his struggles to come to terms with the negative feedback he received in relation to his practice. However, what is unforeseen is the forceful language used to describe the interactions he has with this member of staff, using words such as 'grilling' and 'barking', to reference how the teacher-mentor played 'psychological mind games' and 'never picked up on the good things'.

Ryan's description of the lack of support he got from this teacher-mentor conjures up a child-like sense of inequity, reflecting a situation where he felt others were purposely ignoring his ability to teach. His resentment of the way in which his teacher-mentor offered feedback on his progress suggests a growing frustration with his lack of agency as a student teacher, cumulating in a confrontational conversation:

*Anything that I could be given credit for was always taken away... [He] was always picking on the negatives all the time. I had a conversation with him: "We're very good at giving the kids two stars and a wish but you're not very good at giving the adults these. You're hammering me all the time. There's nothing you are picking on that's positive".*

Ryan concludes his explanation of his fraught relationship with this particular teacher-mentor by summarising his experiences on his final placement. He draws on a theme of not giving up, in spite of the difficulties:

*He (teacher-mentor) tried to break me in the first 4 weeks and when I kept coming back and coming back stronger I like to think. Like one of the points in my final observation was that I was very tenacious and a lesser person would have quit, so I think for the first four weeks he tried to break me and when he couldn't break me he just relaxed with me.*

In Ryan's description of triumph over adversity – a recognisable 'standard-plot' – he stories himself as strong and powerful, elevating himself from his lesser positioning as an inadequate student teacher. Emotive language is again used in his description of his fight to be valued and recognised as a good teacher by those in authority who have positioned him as lesser than. In his account, Ryan references the power and resolve he uses to win, drawing on his teacher-mentor's words from his lesson observation to self-author someone who is resilient when facing difficulties. His choice of words evoke typical hegemonic masculinised emotions of self-control, resilience and strength and aid visualisation of the story he wants to tell. Ryan's recollection of this situation has implications for his identity. His responses to the problems he experiences with the teacher-mentor provides a space for agency where he can reposition himself as someone with more confidence and self-belief. Ryan's description of this situation reflects Holland et al.'s idea of identities as a 'staging post' in a journey of the self, where his responses may provide a space for agency for the construction of new 'hybrid'

identities: in this case an identity with more confidence and self-belief. As such, Ryan's identity in the figured world is 'hard won'.

Ryan continues to describe himself as victorious despite the difficult conditions. He recalls comments from his final assessment of practice, that 'showed the way I was improving, 'demonstrating tenacity''. Ryan's return to phrases he used in the previous narrative reinforces their importance in highlighting his ability to keep fighting against the risk of failing his teaching placement. However, what goes unmentioned in Ryan's descriptions is his teaching ability; instead, he focuses on phrases that refer to his personality and strength of character with explicit reference to hegemonic masculine characteristics – positioning himself amongst others who already occupy spaces of higher status in the primary school.

Ryan talked about not fitting in in terms of his positioning as a student teacher who had very little support from school staff during his training. Nevertheless, he demonstrates some challenge and resistance to his positioning through highlighting the ineffective support and irrational behaviour he has experienced from his teacher-mentors, counteracting their evaluations of his daily practice in the classroom and positioning himself differently. Ryan is thus able to reposition himself by drawing on hegemonic masculine performances and characteristics to self-identify as strong and resolute in the face of adversity. Within his self-authoring he uses the words and categories from powerful others: as Bakhtin (1981) would have it, Ryan's 'I-for-myself' becomes explicit through naming the 'I-for-others' and the 'other-in-myself'. He is beginning to appropriate words of others with his own intention in his answers, answering and responding to his struggles and difficulties.

## 5.4 Comfortable positions

### 5.4.1 The leader: "I would love to be a head teacher"

Ryan's narratives evoke recognisable figures of men in leadership positions produced within the 'monoglossic gender matrix' (Francis, 2012) – the general understanding of masculine and feminine as binaries. I ask him to describe where he might be in five years' time: 'If I do stay in teaching I see myself progressing. I would be in charge of something, subject leader. I've got the ambition to be a head teacher'. Here, Ryan draws

on recognisable ‘gender genre’ (Francis, 2012) – an archetypal figure of male head teacher – to illustrate his positioning in the future. He implies that becoming a head teacher would be the pinnacle of his career and is a realistic possibility for the future. I probe him for reasons of wanting to be a leader:

*CW: Why would you be a head teacher then?*

*Ryan: Why? Because it’s an achievement, like I said before it just proves if you set out to do things, no matter what people thought at high school, then you can achieve it. It would make my mum proud, my wife proud and my family proud.*

Ryan returns to reflecting on the impact of his career choice through explaining what it would mean for him to be a head teacher. He revisits his earlier theme of battling against the words of others – from his time as a school student and indeed as a student teacher – thus authoring himself as a success as he addresses the historical voices who have previously positioned him as an underachiever: proving them wrong. What is important here is that although Ryan describes his future position as separate from his historical school self, he still struggles to distance himself from his positional identity as a ‘plodder’. This is the first time Ryan introduces his wife and mother, although these figures were implicit in his earlier narrative, where the responsibilities of having ‘a mortgage and all of the things that go with that’ made him feel like he ‘wasn’t going anywhere’. As such, his reference to how others would feel about the possibility of him becoming a head teacher affords Ryan a respected and valued position in his family.

#### 5.4.2 In demand: “I didn’t go into it blind”

Ryan is aware of the policy-driven calls for more men to enter into primary teaching and openly admits that he went into teaching knowing that there would be a high chance of gaining employment at the end of his degree:

*I knew from the beginning I had researched this. I knew there was going to be a demand at the end of it. There’s the government drive for more males, wrongly or rightly, if you and I go for the same job, with same qualifications, I am going to get the job. It’s discrimination but at the moment that’s the way it is... I didn’t want to go through it and at the end say there’s no demand, no jobs.*

As is evident from his account, Ryan describes his perception of the ease of getting a job as a primary teacher because he is a man. However, the elevated position he places himself in – a direct contrast to myself – is surprising, as his unsubstantiated statement ignores his position as a student teacher and my role as a university tutor and experienced primary school teacher. During the process of analysis, rather than at the time of the interview, I became aware of the tension created through embedding the positioning of both of us within the monoglossic gender matrix. As my analysis developed, and with it my own sense of self as a researcher, I was able to answer the relationship between Ryan and myself with more honesty and clarity. Initially, I considered Ryan in control of his choice to ignore voices that acknowledge this difference in our status and experience. However, as my research experiences deepened, I started to contemplate different interpretations of Ryan's replies to his situation in the figured world. Within his account, his explicit reference to voices featured in the monoglossic gender matrix acknowledges the strength of this discourse and his lack of agency to improvise an alternative response to his experiences. However, as this unitary language positions Ryan with more prestige in the figured world, there is no need for him to contradict this and bring forth an alternative voice.

Repeating a now familiar theme of triumph over adversity, Ryan's final narrative is one of being headhunted by a school for being a male. When I ask him about applying for jobs, he tells me: 'I didn't have to apply for any. I was actively sought', explicitly supporting his earlier point that referenced the positive discrimination of male primary teachers. His short sentences are populated with meaning and intentions as these words 'taste' of the teaching profession where student teachers usually apply for teaching posts. Ryan continues by describing his interview:

*I think they looked at the pool and they were looking for, I don't know this, but I think they were looking for a male primary school teacher. There was only about three that I saw in the whole school. Potentially they were looking for an NQT because we are cheaper to employ. I think I suited their criteria perhaps. I don't know that. They seeked me out, so I was down there on the interview with two other guys. So, I don't know how many other people came but straight away, there was three males. It makes me wonder.*



Ryan tells me how he was selected, above other students, to be interviewed by this school. His self-authoring as 'in demand' as a male primary teacher helps him address those historical voices that had positioned him as 'lazy' and 'useless'. Instead, he is able to mediate some agency to reposition himself as a valued member of the primary school as 'they seeked him out'. I ask him whether he thinks this is fair:

*Not at all, its discrimination but it happens everywhere...rightly or wrongly what do you do? Morally do you say sorry but there are more people better qualified than me to do this job or do you take the job? You know unfortunately or fortunately, it's worked in my favour.*

Ryan's account legitimises the power he has as a man by suggesting positive discrimination stems from the dominant gender discourses that operate within schools, over which he has no control. Moreover, the questions he asks seems to highlight the futility of resistance in this scenario and enables him to check I have understood the meaning and intentions he has assigned to these words.

Ryan's story culminates in his final acceptance into the figured world of the primary school. He is elevated in status, going from a student teacher battling to fit in, to an employed teacher ready to start teaching in September. His story provides him with a chance to address the negative voices that position him as lesser than in the primary school:

*I think when they are willing to give you some of their valuable time...they have a massive impact. It's such a positive. The school where I had my interview last week, they were so wonderful and so nice and they gave me a hug at the end, when they gave me the job. It's such a little thing but nice. I felt valued...already. It has given me more confidence. That I was lacking...that confidence has come back again. They obviously want me and have faith in me and my ability. They have only met me briefly but they have faith in me from what they have seen and what they have heard. It's a fantastic feeling, amazing feeling!*

The 'hug' that completes the interview process is important for a number of reasons: as a form of comfort and reassurance for Ryan and an indication of how others (the interview panel) are repositioning him. It is noticeable that the emotional words Ryan uses to describe himself and the situation suggest that he may have found a more comfortable position that enables him to fit in and rebuild a more positive sense of self through affirmation from others with power and status. The words he chooses to

describe this incident contrast sharply with the aggressive, hostile terms he used previously, implying that his responses to his new situation may be helping to rebuild the self-esteem damaged through his negative experiences in school.

The hug, as a mediation device, has the power to rupture his former student teacher habitus and reposition him in a more comfortable position. In this sense, the interviewers are welcoming him into the figured world, allowing him access into different, more privileged spaces. The final part of his story provides his dialogic self a chance to 'escape' the negative voices that render him as ineffective in the classroom and 'a pest'. Ryan, as an agentic being, addresses others – his ex-Head teacher, his teacher-mentor, and me – in order to reposition himself with more power and status. Consequently, he has found a more comfortable fit within what Holland et al. may consider a 'privileging space', figured by the world of gender. Significantly, within his final narrative the relationships and the material conditions change and so Ryan can begin to 'answer' these new conditions in relation to the self and the "old 'answers' about who [he] is may be undone" (Holland et al, 1998:189).

This is a classic success story. Ryan, the hero figure, through his own strength and tenacity, overcomes injustice and adversity in order to fit in as a male primary teacher. He constantly battles to counteract his lesser positioning and find a more comfortable position within the primary school, which when it does happen evokes strong feelings from him and illustrates how important is for him to feel valued by others. Ryan's case is typical of those found in current research – the 'standard plot' – in that he exploits his position as a male primary teacher, drawing without question on dominant gender discourses to do so, although I argue that his struggles and discomfort are an important resource for his self-authoring as someone with more status and power.

## 6 Analysis two: Discomfort and difficulties in becoming a male primary teacher

In this chapter, I focus on the narratives of the six other male primary teachers when they first started teaching. The majority were final year student teachers, although Mark and Leo were Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) coming to the end of their first year of employment. Their stories of becoming a primary teacher partly echo those of Ryan. They describe their position as Early Career teachers struggling with their classroom practice or as men under scrutiny through their choice to teach young children. Consequently, they talk about their difficulties in fitting in. Like Ryan, in response to their lesser positioning, they draw on the dominant gender discourses that operate within the primary school. Thus, through exercising some agency, they are able to occupy more powerful and privileged positions that are available for them as men. However, unlike Ryan, some of the participants describe feelings of discomfort in these more privileged positions but as teachers in the early stages of their career, they struggle to mediate any alternative position.

### 6.1 Newcomer: “I got through training by the skin of my teeth”

Leo is a Newly Qualified Teacher when I first meet him. He describes the difficulties he had whilst training to become a primary teacher where difficult personal circumstances meant: ‘I went into the next [final] placement, heart was not in it, really distracted, feeling quite depressed a lot of the time.’ He tells me that he ‘wanted to stick with teaching’ but felt he ‘wasn’t up to getting a job’ so ‘with much trepidation’ he decides to try supply work. Leo’s narrative focuses on his experiences as an NQT supply teacher, using these stories to describe how his ‘confidence was building’ and how he was told by many schools that he had ‘done a good job’. His reference to words of important figures, such as head teachers and deputy head teachers, position Leo as more successful than his circumstances suggest. It is noticeable that this does not occur in all of his stories however, as he begins to tell me about the times when he had ‘a couple of knocks’ from schools:

*I did the first week...I got a call from the agency saying don't bother turning up tomorrow. What has happened is they had decided the dynamic in that*

*room between you and the teacher was just not right. My first thoughts was what on earth does that mean? ...They said it wasn't a problem with your teaching. 'Your teaching is as good as we expect an NQT's to be'. So there is a backhanded compliment. They didn't say what the problem was and they didn't even say what the dynamic was that they wanted. My thought has been that that wasn't the real reason they didn't want to continue with me.*

Leo describes his confusion as to why the school felt he did not fit in. He is seemingly aware of his positioning as a newcomer into teaching, referring to the 'backhanded compliment' from the school that places him alongside all other NQTs. However, he does not mention the issue of classroom dynamics that forms part of this account; instead, he infers that the staff in school were dishonest, as they did not let him know their real reasons for not asking him back. Moreover, by prefacing this highly personal and critical story using the phrase, 'a couple of knocks', Leo implies that the situation was less serious than it may have been. His confusion over the experience begins to highlight his struggle to come to terms with not fitting in and any feelings of insecurity that may stem from his difficulties.

Reflecting Ryan's previous account of his teacher training, Nick, a mature student, describes the feeling of 'being on [his] own', and how he was 'left to it' in the primary school. His positioning as a neophyte is explicit in his description of his relationships with teacher-mentors, demonstrated in his inability to ask for help. Nick shows an awareness of his lack of status in the primary school, describing his need for comfort and support whilst on school placements. This is not always available for him:

*I have been in schools I have just felt that some people are too busy or too stressed and I just keep away. You just get that feeling... They are so busy and I felt in certain schools, you might be told the door is always open, but it really isn't. With a good mentor you feel like somebody is putting their arm around you and helping you.*

Nick talks of 'keeping away' rather than asking for the help that he is entitled to as a student teacher, suggesting an uneasiness in expressing any difficulties he may be having. These feelings of discomfort may stem from dominant gender discourses discussed in Chapter 2, which positions men with strength and resilience and renders those men who display feminine traits as weak or 'Other'. However, as Nick continues

to describe his teacher training experiences he makes a suggestion that his age may be the problem for the discomfort he feels:

*You're just expecting me to be perfect in everything you do and know everything...lesson plans and everything ready at their standard not my student standard...It might be to do with my age. I don't know, [they] expect me to be ready as an experienced teacher. I'm still learning, still finding my feet and I still will be for a few years.*

Nick talks about the unreasonable expectations that members of staff have of him. He is aware that becoming a primary teacher will not be easy and will take some time, but within his account, he places an emphasis on the teacher-mentors not understanding the difficulties he faced. It is noticeable that Nick is able to defend his practice and his feelings of insecurity through his response that demonstrates a realisation of how he may be 'read' differently – as an experienced figure due to his age, rather than the struggling student teacher – eliciting a more reasonable reaction to his situation. Nick is not alone in recalling a sense of discomfort during teacher training.

## 6.2 'Other': "She hated men"

Craig introduces the gender dimension explicitly as part of his struggle with being positioned as 'Other' within his placement school. In his account, he begins by telling me about the problems he had in keeping his paperwork up to date: 'My files weren't good enough basically', and explains that he 'wasn't hugely shocked' when he was put 'At risk of failing [his] placement'. Craig is able to reflect on how he felt during this time, establishing a sense of dismay: 'It was a little bit demoralising to be honest, thinking back. I was quite upset about it.' Continuing the narrative, he acknowledges that he managed to pass this placement, as he was 'just good enough to scrape through', admitting: 'if I was being honest, I knew I wasn't being as organised as I needed to be.' In explanation, he describes his teacher-mentor: a male teacher who was 'quite laid back about paperwork and organisation.' Thus, echoing Ryan's explanations in the previous chapter, Craig reasons that the problems he had with his files stemmed from the support he had in school: 'He [teacher-mentor] was really good, I learnt a lot from him about teaching and how to deal with the children but I don't think he helped me particularly with the organisational side of things.' Here, Craig resists his lesser positioning as a

failure with paperwork through his reference to his teacher-mentor's lack of support, storying himself as someone who accepts doing just enough to pass.

Unfortunately, for Craig his difficulties continue into his third year placement, describing it as 'a nightmare'. He starts by telling me about his teacher-mentor who 'was an absolute nutcase'. We both laugh, answering a voice that criticises his turn of phrase and enabling Craig to continue with his description:

*She hated, well, she never said this but she hated students. And she hated men. At one stage she boasted about how she had made two students quit placement...to me! I think she was telling me I need to step my game up. I need to do this, I need to do that...she said, "Do you remember such and such, he didn't last long?", and "Such and such, he couldn't hack it either?"*

Initially Craig uses humour to frame his experiences with his teacher-mentor, although his choice of words implies that it was a stressful and difficult time for him. His account reflects findings from the literature that claim male primary teachers display dominant discursive gendered practices, such as humour, in order to manage difficult situations. Craig's imitation of his teacher-mentor recounting her experiences with other male student teachers enables him to position her as unreasonable and unkind, reminiscent of Ryan's descriptions of his final teacher-mentor. It is noticeable that Craig's parodic response challenges the validity of how he was positioned as 'Other' – both as a student and as a man. I question Craig further on his experiences with his teacher-mentor:

*CW: You said that she previously got rid of **him**, twice, so were both men?*

*C: I'm not sure if both were. But I know the previous one, maybe that's why. Perhaps she just had a really bad experience with one and she just thought of everyone else the same...She used to say all men were dead unorganised.*

*CW: How did you get through it?*

*C: I just had to...I just had to... I can't emphasise how bad it was. It was the seven worst weeks of my life. I just had to...I considered quitting and when she said that she'd made people leave the course. That made me think, "Wow; you're not going to make me! I'll show you!"*

Here, Craig counteracts my questioning of his assumption that both the students in the teacher-mentor's stories were male by using indirect speech from her that references her generalisation of men and her irrational behaviour. As Craig reflects on the emotions

he felt in this difficult situation he describes his experience with a strength of feeling, self-authoring – as Ryan did – someone who needed to show great determination and resilience in order to pass school-based training. His response to his discomfort with the teacher-mentor references his ability to demonstrate strength and willpower, recognised as ‘go to’ gendered emotions for men (Seidler, 2007). It is noticeable that Craig’s account of becoming a primary teacher evokes an increasingly familiar ‘standard plot’, where he has to battle to make a stand against his teacher-mentor’s disapproval.

All of the participants, at some time or another, tell stories of isolation and feeling uncomfortable in schools because they are men. They describe finding it ‘difficult to integrate into the school’ and conversations where they ‘don’t feel [they] can get involved’. Mark’s descriptions of his experiences whilst training to teach highlight the discomfort he felt as ‘the only male in the school’. He struggles to articulate why it was difficult for him to ‘integrate into the school’, explaining: ‘I’m not just branding all female teachers, as the school I’m at now I get on with everyone, it was just at that school it was difficult to get into there.’ To help clarify the situation, I question Mark further:

*CW: What were they doing? To make you feel this way?*

*M: Just the conversations. Girly things. I’m not saying that I’m a ‘boy-boy’ but...it was just in the staffroom. Not in the classroom, the teaching side of things. It was the personal, getting on with others. I just didn’t feel that I could build up the type of relationships with the staff there. I got on absolutely fine with the teaching relationships: that was fine. It was more on a personal level.*

Mark’s further reflections suggest that his struggle to fit in may stem from difficulties with ‘personal’ relationships in school. He clarifies that his teaching and the relationships he made in the classroom were ‘fine’, but it was the ‘girly’ conversations in the staffroom that made him feel uncomfortable. Mark makes it clear to me that the cause of his discomfort stems from the environment and not his ability to develop positive relationships. As clarification, he self-authors as someone who was not overly masculine: not a ‘boy-boy’, answering any critique of gender stereotypical behaviour. Like Mark, Leo also describes feeling awkward and uncomfortable in the staffroom:

*Sometimes they tell jokes where men are the butt of the jokes and they are all looking at me when they tell it. I think they are trying to get a reaction.*

*I just look at them as whatever I say is going to be the wrong thing so I will just look at you until you move on.*

In this comment, Leo recalls feeling restricted in being able to 'joke' with the other members of staff as the 'joke' is about him as a man. Implicit in Leo's narrative is his lack of agency within this space. He describes having to accept being the target of the joke, waiting instead until the moment has passed – reduced to a non-verbal response. Leo's narrative positions him as vulnerable and uncomfortable in his need to withdraw from the situation.

Chris, a student teacher, stories himself as being positioned inaccurately and uncomfortably by significant others, namely 'parents and the media', as he references the dominant gender discourse of being under surveillance as a potential paedophile. Chris describes his struggle against this powerful discourse tentatively, never actually articulating what the problem is. His response seems to suggest feelings of awkwardness in describing this uncomfortable situation and alludes to demonstrating strength and resilience in order to cope with the experience:

*There's so much stigma attached because of the media and people talking...You're always being judged and looked at differently to the female members of staff...You've got to show that you've broken the mould and you're not like the media portray and what people expect.*

Chris describes his struggle against these images, in Bakhtin's words: "striving to liberate himself from the influence of such an image and its discourse by means of objectification" (1981:348). His defiant response to the dominant gender discourse of men under suspicion when working with children supports Chris's self-authoring as different to the negative public perception of male teachers. He continues to answer voices from this discourse using overheard conversations:

*They [parents] say, "Have you heard about this male teacher all this messing around? They're not suitable for the job." You can hear it and although they don't know you're in the profession...they expect you to join in with them, "Yeah, that's disgusting..." If I'd have said to them actually I'm in the profession, I wonder if their reaction would have been different. If I'd have told them... Would they have looked at me differently, tarred me with the same brush?*



Chris' parody of the parents' conversations implies that they have an unquestioning acceptance of the discourse. He intersperses their voices with his own, challenging their authority and resisting the monoglossia that positions him as a paedophile. Chris describes how he would have liked to challenge the parents in their thinking, although is unsure what the impact of his challenge would be. His use of a question at the end is not there to be answered explicitly but instead provides an opportunity for him to demonstrate to me how difficult the situation is for him.

These narratives highlight the discomfort and difficulties all of the participants experience during their training and first year of teaching. They talk about struggling to come to terms with their positioning as neophytes without the appropriate support from their teacher-mentors, and as men – out of place and under suspicion – because of their gender. Their response to the uncomfortable situations they find themselves in is emotional – displaying strength and resilience or awkwardness and silence – enabling them to make further sense of their experience and themselves.

### 6.3 In demand: “You’ll just walk into a job”

All of the men in my study find comfort and security in ‘real men’ positions that support traditional images of masculinity as a response to their lesser positioning. Most of them discuss the prestigious position of being ‘in demand’ in primary schools and ‘actively sought after’ as men, even going as far as to say that it directed them towards this choice of career. Nick, in his description of his experiences of trying to get a job once he qualifies, broaches the subject:

*“You’ll be fine, you’re male, you’ll just walk into a job.” If I heard it once, I’ve heard it a thousand times. I find it a bit patronising to be honest. It might be true...It gives me a reassurance that if there is a demand for male teachers that perhaps my job is more stable than others.*

Nick describes feeling conflicted as a male primary teacher looking for his first job. He acknowledges that the situation privileges him because he is male but although this makes him feel uncomfortable, it is difficult to resist due to the job security it provides. He mixes the voices together, hybridising the languages available for him, those claiming and rejecting gender privileges, giving weight to both. Although the dominant gender

discourse of 'being in demand' positions Nick with more status, it also ignores his ability to teach, positioning him as lesser than and making him feel 'patronised'.

Chris also stories himself as being in demand, and, as Nick's did, his descriptions illustrate a sense of uneasiness with the gender privileges afforded to him as a man. He draws on dominant gender discourses that suggest men bring both a gender balance to the primary teaching workforce and are a 'natural' role model, especially for boys. Chris makes it clear to me that these discourses are recognised and accepted by significant others in the primary school, strengthening the legitimacy of his privileged position:

*I was always told that there was a shortage of male teachers...I might find it easier than females to get a job at the end of it. Mainly because there is that shortage and the male role model is just as important. That's come from governors at schools, teachers at schools, fellow professionals.*

Chris continues to explain how he believes the employment process works for male primary teachers:

*I always felt I was able to be a bit more choosy. Even though I was advised I was not to be for my first job: "Take the first one that comes along"... because I'm male my application would always be second looked at. Where there was a decision to make between mine and a female's I always had the impression that we would go with the male... you know what I mean?*

I ask him for an example:

*On the shortlist of the interviews there were four males and it suggests that however many applied they've gone for four males when I'm sure there were females that applied as well.*

Chris's description of his experience of getting his first teaching post is similar to Ryan's and brings further legitimacy to his position as privileged and in demand as a male primary teacher. He seems to be addressing both the gender monoglossic voice of male power and privilege that enables him to be choosy when looking for his first teaching post and heteroglossic discourse formed from voices that have experience of the NQT job market that suggest he takes the first job offered. Even though the concluding remark softens Chris's use of the monoglossic discourse, the narrative demonstrates the domination of gender monoglossia within his answering. He has created a privileging space through evocation of these voices from others, enabling him to story himself with more status than his teaching experience warrants.

When I meet Chris again, as an NQT, I ask him about his story last year. He tells me: 'some head teachers prefer to have men'. I ask him why he thinks this is the case, he replies:

*It's to...show off, to...say, we've got this many men working at our school, to other schools, head teachers...actually they are in more demand than they think. Even before... university, that's the case I was led to believe and I think...that's still the case.... You know there are so many guys in the area applying for jobs so we'll take as many as we can.*

In this comment, he describes himself and other male primary teachers as actively recruited by head teachers because of their gender. It seems like Chris has little choice but to accept the situation as the hegemonic masculine discourses that position him as privileged additionally position him as a persuasive token where kudos go to head teachers who employ more men. Moreover, his teaching ability goes unrecognised. Chris's account of his 'current' self reflects findings from research reviewed in Chapter 2 that note how dominant gender discourses shape the recruitment choices of head teachers. Notably, there is a willingness to compromise on the teaching quality of teaching staff in light of employing a man. This lesser positioning in relation to any recognition of his teaching ability goes unremarked by Chris, contrasting with Nick's previous response of feeling patronised.

In comparison to Chris, Mark stories himself as successful in the classroom with reference to his experiences of teaching very young children. Noticeably, there is no explicit mention of dominant gender discourses:

*I wanted to move up this year as I've started with reception, got a good grasp, spent two years in year 1 and understand that transition now...I've got those early learning skills you need so I know how to teach them which is good...Me and the other teacher have nailed year 1. We got 100% on the phonics screening test and we were observed as well so it's not like we cheated or anything! We've done really well this year, so I think I've got a good grasp of that.*

Mark describes how his knowledge of teaching different ages of children is continuing to develop. However, his choice of the word 'up' rather than 'to' suggests that he sees teaching Year 2 (6-7 year-olds) as a hierarchical move within the school, rather than just a move to a different year group. Mark also explains that after a maximum of two years teaching the same year group, he has satisfied all of the apparent requirements for

success, using the phrase ‘nailed it’ that refutes any doubt of his expertise in this area. Explaining how the phonics test his class undertook was officially checked helps to substantiate his point. What is important here is that Mark does not refer to any gender discourse in his description, surprising as his narrative situates him working with very young children. Instead, his descriptions of his successes reference masculinised performances of competition and victory which creates some distance between himself and the particular gender discourses that position him as ‘Other’ in this context. Mark’s achievements affords him a position of authority without an explicit reference to his gender.

Later, Mark describes how he sees himself in the future. As Ryan did, Mark self-authors someone who has climbed the career ladder and is in an influential position in the primary schools – a recognised role for male primary teachers:

*From what I've seen...headship...I would want to move up, senior leadership, deputy and then headship. I definitely think I want to go into something like that. To have an impact on a wider scale. Educational changes. I do see myself doing something like that in the future.*

However, the next time I meet Mark things are changing for him in terms of his positioning and storying of himself as he is about to move schools. He describes feeling ‘gutted, absolutely gutted’ about leaving his previous school where he was doing well. He explains his reasons for moving schools, storying himself as successful and driven:

*I thought for my own professional development, I'm not going to get that opportunity there. It doesn't come up that often. I didn't expected to get it, I thought I'd just apply. I've got no experience or background in that area but when I got the interview I thought I'll just give it a go and I got it.*

Mark does not question why, without any relevant ‘experience or background’, he got the job, although he does acknowledge his surprise in securing it. He continues to describe himself as in demand as a primary teacher as his story develops:

*The first thing she [current Head teacher] said was, “Is there anything that would make you stay at this school. What can I give you to make you stay?” But obviously I had made a commitment there that I wanted to go but I was a bit gutted as she is really good and if I did stay I would be given loads of opportunities. She would push me through.*

Mark's account of this experience, using a direct quote from his previous Head teacher that implies a sense of desperation, supports his self-authoring as in demand, and his focus on gaining opportunities to develop professionally. There is a suggestion that the dominant gender discourses that position male primary teachers as successful and in leadership positions may be behind Mark's comment that he felt 'a bit gutted' in turning down his current Head teacher – feeling heteronormative pressure to story himself as someone who values career development. Conversely, his use of the word 'push' indicates a strong force that he may need to accomplish goals he has set himself – an implicit recognition that it may not be as easy to be successful as the gender discourse implies.

#### 6.4 Rarity: "Children...get more excited"

The men in my study used phrases such as being 'a bit unusual' or 'a picture of interest' in a positive way to describe what could be construed as a lesser position available to them in the primary school. Mark talks about how people initially view him in school – being a man is what is noticed first:

*A lot of people think, we've got a male. Were quite fortunate in our school as we have got four male teachers. We are having visits from reception children today and quite a lot of parents comment on how many males we have got in the school. It's like it's quite a big shock really to have male teachers in a primary school. I'm also quite young and I remember that being mentioned by one of my parents at the start of the year.*

What is important here is that Mark connects his rarity as a male primary teacher to a privileged and powerful position that contradicts with being young and relatively inexperienced. He draws on the words of parents to support his authoring as scarce, although in the world he describes there is no mention that people see him as a good teacher.

Like Mark, Chris describes himself as 'different' in the primary school. His 'present' self is closely related with his gendered vision of schooling as he starts by explaining that 'kids' see him as 'more interesting' than female teachers who are 'the norm'. His descriptions of himself from the children's point of view validates his self-authoring as a successful teacher:

*I think the kids get excited when they see a guy walking through the door, just a new face at all, that's always exciting, but when a guy walks in I think, especially the younger children, they get more excited.*

Chris compares the impact he has as both a new teacher in school and a new *male* teacher. In his description of himself, he tells me how the children respond positively to his hegemonic masculine identity, explicitly categorising male and female teachers as separate groups with different interests. He explains why this happens, drawing on specific global stories:

*I think the older children think...oh, there's someone I can go and have a chat about football with...females may have an interest in football, but as soon as a guy walks in, they think, football club, we can talk about this and that, all these sports things.*

In this comment, multivoicedness is visible in the way in which Chris orchestrates his use of the different gender discourses in a number of ways. His responses provide space for agency to reposition himself as high status in the figured world. Chris draws on the monoglossic gender account that positions men and boys as being interested in sport, especially football, to self-author a position of power amongst the children. He is a teacher who is wanted by others: a contrast to the figures that the participants described in early sections of this chapter. However, Chris demonstrates some hesitancy in evoking figures from the monoglossic gender matrix as he backtracks from his initial suggestion that the children enjoy seeing a male teacher, explaining that this may be as they are new in school and not because they are a man. His explanation that it is the children who are actively looking for a male teacher with particular interests, qualifies the positioning of male teachers as 'naturally' bringing specific skills to the primary school. Ultimately, this removes some responsibility from Chris in the valorisation of dominant gender discourses. Moreover, like Mark, Chris may be feeling heteronormative pressure to adhere to normal 'masculine' expectations, for example, liking sport, in order to stop him feeling marginalised and counteract potential lesser positioning as a neophyte or as 'Other'.

Leo is keen to share experiences where those with power and status have praised his teaching ability in school, addressing voices that have positioned him as struggling and not fitting in. He reflects on his time as an NQT, quoting a Head teacher, which validates

his self-authoring as a successful primary teacher and counteracts his lesser positioning as a supply teacher:

*I started to pick up quite a few compliments. From Head teachers, TA's, children. It was quite important that I had lots of children they quite liked me, liked having me around...The Head teacher said that, "you've done a really good job. That is a difficult class and you have handled them really well."*

Leo describes 'being liked' by children, although he tempers this to some extent through his use of the word 'quite'. However, by referencing his ability to manage the class he is able to story himself as someone who is becoming more effective in the classroom and beginning to 'fit'. It is noticeable that his responses provide space for agency to reposition as Leo exercises dominant gender discourse that positions men as effective disciplinarians in his assertion that was not just an ordinary class but also a problem class, positioning him with more status.

Craig reflects on his year as a qualified primary teacher and describes his future position as a curriculum leader. Telling me about his plans for next year, he self-authors as a valuable member of the staff:

*I've got subject leadership next year. Humanities. History, geography and RE. I initially said that I'd like to do History. Then they said, "Would you mind doing History and Geography?" So I said ok. Then it was, "Well what about RE"? So I said well as long as they've got to call me Humanities Supremo, that's my title! If they call me that I don't mind doing all three (laugh).*

Craig asserts how 'they' had given him much more responsibility than was originally agreed, highlighting a demarcation between those who wield power in school and himself. What is important here is his return to humour to frame his authoring – his use of parody may help him lessen the enormity of the task he faces in only his second year of teaching. I suggest that Craig's 'tongue-in-cheek' description of his new leadership role reflects dominant discursive gendered practices where men use humour to manage difficult situations. His use of humour is reminiscent of his earlier account of his 'nutcase' teacher-mentor – a reaction that may have helped reduce the discomfort he felt at the time.

## 6.5 Entertainer: “I like a bit of banter”

Most of the men in the study author themselves as fun, relaxed and amusing – recognised in the literature review as masculine characteristics – and describe how these traits help develop positive relationships in school. I ask Chris, a student teacher, how others see him in school:

*C: I just want to come across as myself...*

*CW: Which is?*

*C: As professional as possible, having a laugh with the staff, having a laugh with the kids, being able to get on personally with them.*

*CW: So humour is quite important then?*

*C: Yes, I think it is...Even sarcasm with upper key stage 2 children...They see you as that sort person. They know when you're being serious and they know when you're being relaxed...when the right time to use it is.*

Chris's account is contradictory and demonstrates the complexities of self-identification within the landscape of heteroglossia. He prefaces his use of humour to build relationships with staff and children with wanting to be seen as 'professional': a mismatch of stratified 'speech genres' (Bakhtin, 1986). Chris is both answering utterances that characterise what it means to be an 'appropriate' teacher and responding to voices, cultural resources such as dominant gender discourses that place value on humour. He appropriates meaning to his individual gender performance by situating them within dominant discursive gendered practices. Chris acknowledges that humour promotes social relations and provides him authority and influence amongst the pupils as he describes how they 'get it' and consequently 'open up a bit more'. His reference to the voices of the children he teaches enables him to occupy a stronger position within the primary school than his neophyte status may suggest.

It is noticeable that he is hesitant in his mention of his use of 'sarcasm', a recognised masculinised emotion (Seidler, 2007), implying an awareness that this type of humour conflicts with being a good teacher. It may be that for Chris, the fear of being positioned as 'Other' in relation to building emotional relationships with children restricts any alternative performance. Thus, he stories himself as a teacher whose relaxed classroom management helps him personally connect with the children he teaches, adhering to



the expectation that male primary teachers feel under pressure to display hegemonic masculine practices, such as the use of humour and banter, in order to manage the classroom. Although Chris is able to exercise some agency to position himself as influential and important in the figured world, he seems restricted in how he is able to build personal relationships with his pupils.

Mark also talks about his use of humour, although in contrast to Chris, Mark refers to his interactions with staff to self-author:

*M: The staff are great where I am and I can say quite a lot. I like a bit of banter with them.*

*CW: With everybody?*

*M: Pretty much. No, even the Head, that's what's so great about this school. Even the Head. Like today we were winding her up at lunchtime.*

In this comment, Mark uses the pronoun 'we' instead of 'I' to describe himself as a legitimate member of staff. His involvement in staffroom activities, such as 'banter', and 'winding up' the Head teacher, positions Mark as an in-group member of staff – a more powerful and privileged position than his novice status might suggest. He describes how he values 'having a laugh' through his reference to the school being 'great' – this type of humour is acceptable here. Mark's account is similar to Chris' in its inference that displays of hegemonic masculinity help position him with more power and status in the primary school. However, Mark, like Chris, is not fully comfortable with these masculinised performances as he explains: 'I don't think that in any other school you could get away with doing what we do'. Again, like Chris, he is unable to mediate an alternative response.

Leo, also talks about using humour that brings him affirmation and acceptance from children and staff. He tells me that he 'wants classes to be relaxed...classes that can have a good time'. His reflections help strengthen his self-authoring: 'I can't yet think of a class that I have left that have not enjoyed working with me.' I then ask Leo if being male makes a difference in schools:

*I think being a man means I do relate to the kids in a different way as I have different interests than some female teachers. I can talk about some super heroes and football. I am maybe more into this than some, not all female*

*teachers, so I can relate to kids in this way. I wouldn't say I relate to kids in a different way because I am male just because of my different manner. I am relaxed, jovial.*

Leo's narrative suggests an uneasiness and awkwardness he has with orchestrating discourse from the monoglossic gender matrix. He initially describes himself by referencing gender discourse that stereotypes male interests to categorise his practice as different from female teachers. However, his use of words such as 'maybe' and 'some' distance him from recognisable male figures. It is noticeable that Leo's response is restricted in its reference to the hegemonic masculine performance where male teachers use humour to manage classroom behaviour. Although he tries to explain that his behaviour is not gendered, he is unable to offer any alternative response to those associated with dominant gender discourses.

Craig also talks about the importance of humour and being relaxed in his descriptions of schools he has worked in as a student teacher. He initially asserts how he did not fit into one placement school, explaining that: 'I didn't think I could open up and have a laugh with the staff'. Continuing, Craig describes gaining a 'sense' in relation to his preferred type of school environment:

*Looking at schools to work in, you go for the visit and if you don't get the vibe, you know it's not for you...You know if they're relaxed with you, having a bit of a laugh with you. You know what you're letting yourself in for.*

It seems that he is not only self-authoring someone who can be more selective in his choice of where he works but also someone who places importance on humour and an informal school environment, both implicit in their reference to hegemonic masculine characteristics.

This chapter has shown how my participants describe discomfort and difficulties as newcomers to primary teaching and as men, finding themselves in lesser positions. The analysis has demonstrated how they have felt unsupported and unwelcome by members of staff but are able to mediate some agency to counteract their lesser positioning through reference to dominant gender discourses. Although my participants draw on hegemonic masculine performances of humour, strength and resilience that help negotiate who they are in a context in which they are not entirely comfortable;

they are restricted in their positioning as they struggle to reference any acknowledgement they have had in terms of being a good teacher. Furthermore, the majority of them share feelings of awkwardness and uneasiness in their descriptions of a situation where they are under pressure to conform to assumed ways of being and behaving as men.

## 7 Analysis three: Tony's story of change

This chapter features the story of Tony whose specialism was teaching pre-school children. Like the other participants, his narrative focused on struggling to fit in to the primary school and the difficulties he had with his everyday practice in the classroom. However, his response to his discomfort differs from the rest of the participants. Tony describes the confusion and conflict he experiences in making sense of his professional and personal identity in terms of being a man and a primary teacher. His account is illustrative of being unable to reconcile the 'burden' of having 'natural' masculinised roles imposed on him.

### 7.1 Challenge and determination: "A big step up"

Tony begins by describing himself as someone who had 'always wanted to go into teaching'. He tells me that all through high school he wanted to be a secondary school teacher but this changed when he went into a nursery setting and was told by those working there that he was: 'really good with young children'. This led Tony to organise some work experience in a reception class [4-5 years] and nursery [0-4 years] where he recalls thinking: 'yes, this is more me'. He continues to reflect on his journey into teaching by describing his experiences during school-based training:

*Well, my first year placement was really good, I really enjoyed that. That was in a Year 3 [7-8 years] class. Really liked the school, really enjoyed it, got a good report by the end of it so I thought, yep, sorted. Second year though, a little bit more difficult. It was, umm (pause) I don't know the best way to say, I don't think I was supported...*

Tony then describes how things changed in his second year:

*Not so bad the school, I was in a year 2 class. I had the deputy of the school in my class. Nothing...not that anyone did anything wrong I just felt that because she was deputy, she had a day a week out of the class. She was always going off to meetings, I never really had a support.*

Within his account of his experiences during his second year placement, Tony self-authors as confused and vulnerable:

*There was no help and I was a bit like, 'I don't have a clue about what I am doing'...It [placement] didn't go well. I knew myself I was struggling but I never, didn't really have consistent [feedback] or anything... knowing what*

*I know, it wasn't going well. Yeah, I think the support wasn't there so when it actually happened I was a bit...I was sat with the teacher and she says 'we're going to put you at risk of failure' and it was like, ah, right. It wasn't what I had been led to think was going to be that way.*

The world of the primary school had changed for Tony from his first year to his second year of teacher training. He had gone from someone who had it 'sorted' to not having a 'clue'. It is noticeable that he does not acknowledge his initial naivety of thinking he had 'cracked' teaching in his first year placement, although he does reference how he recognised at the time that he was struggling to be successful. With some hesitancy – which may stem from my own position as a university tutor or his recognition that he is shifting the blame of his failure onto others – Tony describes the problems he had with his teacher-mentor, echoing the other participants' experiences. Within his reference that there was no support from his teacher-mentor, there is also an implied unwillingness in wanting to share his concerns and problems with others at the school. Fundamentally, Tony's account of his failure in his second year placement suggests that although his teacher-mentor may not have had the time to support him effectively, he was also to blame for some of the difficulties he encountered.

Tony tells me about his response to failing his placement. He had initially considered retraining in social work but after working in a nursery for a year he decided being a teacher meant he would be 'more involved...working with children'. After 'agreeing to do the placement again', and passing, Tony then describes his 'favourite' placement teaching reception children (4-5 years):

*It was really supportive and I got on really well with the staff. I think that the foundation stage was outstanding, the school was good in general but the foundation stage was outstanding. So I got in and got lots of support from them. I really enjoyed that placement. It was a big step up from year 2. Each placement is a big step up from the last one. It was hard but it was hard in a good way. I never felt that: 'oh I don't want to do this.'*

In this comment, Tony describes how important the support from the staff in school was. In his response, he draws on Ofsted categorisations of schools that highlight the high quality of teaching and learning he has encountered there. Like the other participants, Tony stories himself as resilient and determined to succeed, in his case, welcoming the challenges that related to the annual increases in expectations and

requirements of his teacher-training programme. He continues by telling me about the 'pressure' of 'wanting to do it right all the time':

*I did well in the end but as my final placement was in September, being at the beginning of the school year, it was very hard. It was hard in any year when they are settling in but Reception [4-5 years] was very hard ...just to go in and be a teacher 80%, which is your NQT year. Well I thought, well this is what it's going to be in real life so I will have to get used to it.*

Tony describes how difficult he found the increased responsibility as a final year student teacher. His overuse of the word 'hard' reiterates his response to the challenges of his placement, although reflecting on what it might feel like as a qualified teacher, he self-authors as someone who is resolute in his decision to teach in primary schools. Tony qualifies the difficulties he had during teacher training by returning to his previous theme of feeling pressure to 'please all the time':

*So I was always, "Is this right? But are you sure? I can change it!" And she [teacher-mentor], would be, "Yes, its fine!" So, I think once I'd gone past that I thought, 'Yes I can do this!' It was difficult, the added pressure of it being the final year on top of everything and maybe, I'm not one to stress usually, but the situation. It's really important. I know the classification of your degree comes from your assignments but it's really the practice. I know from being in interviews, that's what they ask about. No one asks about your written work - they ask about your placements. That's why it's so important, especially your final one. That's what they all want to know about. I think you're just thinking all of the time: 'I've got to do well, if I get 'Requires Improvement' I will never get a job', which isn't true really but it's there, you're thinking it.*

Multiple voices are evident in the way Tony intersperses the conversations he had with his teacher-mentor with his inner voice, orchestrating them to help him explain the challenges of final placement. Tony's initial recollections imply a sense of insecurity he had in relation to his planning and teaching, describing his need for his teacher-mentor's agreement before he became more independent. He expresses his difficulties by reflecting on how the situation made him feel 'unusually' stressed, suggesting that he would usually be more easy-going. Surprisingly, unlike the other participants, Tony does not refer to the dominant gender discourses of men being in demand and obtaining employment easily. Instead, he describes the pressure that he felt during his final placement: the pressure not only to pass but also to pass with distinction in order to get

a job. Tony tempers this point using the phrase 'isn't true really', returning to the familiar theme of men securing a primary teaching post with ease.

When I next meet Tony, although he is at the end of his first year as an NQT he continues to describe himself as 'clueless'. There is no mention of his developing pedagogical practice; instead, he talks about his feelings of confusion and uncertainty in relation to his daily practice in the nursery:

*As a student...you have got a teacher there holding your hand all the way through...then it's sort of as if you've gone right back...It is sort of you are the teacher and you are expected to know everything. Well obviously you don't, you've only just qualified so it's almost as if you have gone back to the stage, gosh I'm on my own, I haven't got a clue what to do. You know your confidence comes in and you do know what to do.*

Tony evokes a historical child-like objectification of his teacher-mentor holding his hand to tell his new story, explicit in its lower positioning. What is important here is that he connects his previous experiences and feelings as a student teacher as part of his 'history-in-person', improvising with his past cultural experiences and positional identities in response to what is happening to him in the present. Thus, Tony's reference to the fact he has only been a qualified teacher for less than a year allows him to acknowledge that his lesser positioning and his sense of inadequateness is normal: he does not have the support he once had as a student teacher and so cannot yet claim to be a proficient teacher. However, his final comment enables him to self-author as a teacher with more 'confidence'. Tony is now storying himself as someone who 'knows what to do' in the figured world.

## 7.2 The 'natural' role model: "We really need male staff"

Like some of the other participants, expectations of being a male role model for children, especially boys, feature significantly in Tony's account. Initially, he tells of his family's reaction to him teaching the younger children in school:

*My mum kept on saying: "Are you going to go back into year 6 (10-11 year olds)? Are you going to go back up there?" They never said anything really but just: "Are you going to go back into year 6?"*

His comment steers our conversation towards the position of being in demand as a man teaching in primary schools:

*I think this is really interesting, because people say we need male staff but I don't know why...because they say we need them because there isn't any but what are we going to do? If women are replaced with men what's going to happen as a result? I don't know if it's a more of a need than a want really. I think that it's good obviously, I think we should have an even mix...*

Tony's response to the mainstream gender discourses that position male primary teachers as in demand and valued as men is unlike the other participants. He calls into question the gender assumptions that suggest men 'naturally' bring something different to teaching. However, in Tony's final comment he backtracks on his original questioning of gender 'truths', instead he accepts that increasing the number of male teachers is 'obviously' what should happen. The implications of his U-turn highlights how powerful gender discourses may restrict his ability to effectively question or reject his identity as a 'prized commodity' (Jones, 2007:180) in the primary school.

Continuing with the theme of male teachers as 'natural' role models, Tony describes himself, like Chris in the previous chapter, using phrases such as 'being out of the norm' and 'children acting differently' with him as he is male. He then tells me about the relationships he has made with the boys in the nursery:

*I've found that being the only male...in the nursery, there are a couple of boys, and when they see me, they are like, "Yes, you're here today", and come over. It's just like they get sick of that's it's just women all the time and I think to have more men would be nice.*

Using the boys' words – words that he has not actually heard but words that he believes the boys would use – Tony creates a 'gendering space', a particular 'privileging space'. Similar to Ryan and his story of a 'hug' from his new Head teacher, Tony's imagined voices of the boys imply they are pleased to see him which may help him answer the gender discourses that position him as 'Other', as he is able to self-author as someone who is wanted. His final point helps to counteract his lesser positioning, as it classifies both female teachers as less important, and himself, as a man, with a greater status and prestige. However, he softens his point by finishing the statement with the word 'nice', suggesting again that he is still unsure what men bring to the environment that is different to female teachers.



Like many of the other participants, Tony stories himself as valued and important as a male primary teacher by drawing on conversations he has had with both nursery staff and parents:

*T: You get a lot of comments: You know, "My son really likes having a male around."*

*R: Did the staff say that, "Oh it's good to have a male teacher?"*

*D: Yes, all the staff because they just don't get it do they? Like I say it is unusual. We're all happy to have a male in the mix.*

*R: Did they say why?*

*D: The general thing is that it is good for the boys. That's sort of it though. Good for the boys in what way? Everyone that works in early years says that we need more men in early years but no one seems to know why. I've been in there a year and I am still none the wiser.*

His reference to being 'happy to have a male in the mix' initially seems to suggest that he accepts his privileged positioning without question. However, as we continue the discussion, Tony returns to interrogating the gender 'truths', asserting that there is a lack of clarification on what men bring that is different. His point enables him to challenge the hegemonic masculine discourse that positions both men as necessary in primary and nursery school settings and female teachers as subordinate. It is noticeable that his response is temporary, as his use of the term 'we're' suggests a struggle to detach himself from the constraints of gender monoglossia that privileges Tony as a man.

Tony's next account echoes those of the other participants in that he stories himself as a 'trophy' and 'unusual'. However, he describes his unease with being positioned in this way. I initially ask if he is happy in how he is viewed by parents and staff:

*Maybe...because I knew that they liked me...everyone always wants that, especially if you are a new teacher. To have that positive feedback from parents. So I guess...but I think in some ways it does take away from you as a teacher. Thinking of you as a male. It's good to have a male teacher, I suppose it's good to have a teacher. Not all nurseries have a teacher. You know it's good to have a female teacher. They have a female teacher and now all of a sudden it's good to have a male teacher. It is almost as if they are focusing in on that. Its men working with young children. That's what people talk about rather than are you any good with the children...I think*

*at first it's just we've got a male and it's a novelty but I think...you realise you're all doing the same job really. That novelty has passed. Novelties do wear off. I'm not so much a trophy anymore!*

Tony's account is one of contestation and conflict. His initial reply to my question shows how important it was for him as a neophyte to feel accepted and 'liked' by parents. However, his response is short-lived as he continues to describe the uneasiness he feels about being valued just because he is a man, echoing the response of Nick and Chris to the gender privileges afforded to them. Tony continues by storying himself as being in demand, recognising this privileged position, not because he is a male teacher, but because he is teaching pre-school children: his distinction helps to clarify his position as a 'novelty'. He describes the hierarchy of positions available in this environment, referencing the binarised discursive positioning of female teachers as low status. Tony distances himself from this monoglossic gender account of the importance of men teaching in primary schools with his use of 'they' and 'people'. The process of sorting out and orchestrating the voices available to him is clear as he moves from one voice to the next and back again, which helps him expose the limitations of the influential gendered discourse.

What is important here is that Tony describes his unease in being positioned by gender alone, explicitly questioning how the discourse renders his teaching ability as inconsequential which positions him as lesser than. He seems unable to resist the gender privileges that position him as powerful, although he describes feeling uncomfortable. His final comments are significant in how Tony responds to changes relating to his ability to claim gender privileges. It seems that even as he becomes more experienced in the figured world, significant others still have the power to reposition him and in this case, restrict his access to gender privileges.

### 7.3 Responding to discomfort: "I just find there's always a drama"

The theme of men as managers of Early Years (0-4 years) settings featured significantly in Tony's story. He reflects on his choice to work as a teacher in a nursery rather than a primary school:

*That's what I'd worked for, to be a teacher. I guess because I was career-minded I wanted that position. I didn't want to be a nursery nurse*

*practitioner, I wanted to be the sort of the status of a teacher. Not for any big-headed reason. I wanted the leadership and to have that which brings me onto my next point. It started to cause a bit of jealousy amongst the staff.*

In this account, Tony stories himself as a leader and a manager of the nursery he teaches in, explicitly comparing his elevated position to the other members of staff: nursery nurses. His self-authoring as 'career-minded' implies that the others he worked alongside did not have a similar drive and aspirations. His position within this setting reflects findings from research reviewed in Chapter 2, where men working in Early Years settings are associated with hegemonic masculine practices and positioned as managers, reproducing masculine power within school management structures. It may also be the case that the gender regimes that operate within the Early Years setting and that define possibilities for action, may be directing Tony into leadership as a socially and culturally recognised 'masculine' role.

It is noticeable that his position as a leader within this recognised feminised workplace provides access to more power and status, counteracting any alternative positioning as 'Other'. Tony's final point is important as it introduces a different set of difficulties he was experiencing – problems that related to his relationships with staff. He describes his response to the discomfort he was feeling as a leader:

*I just thought, 'I don't need this.' It was really getting me down. Everything else was fine. I hadn't said anything to anyone just because it's quite gossipy, you know what I mean? You say one thing to one person and then everyone knows. It's that kind of place.*

Tony's account demonstrates how he again felt he was unable to express the difficulties he was experiencing with others in the nursery, reminiscent of his earlier narrative as a failing student teacher. He attributes his silence and discomfort to the 'gossipy' environment, explicit in its reference to a feminised workplace. Tony's comment positions the other members of staff as unprofessional – a direct contrast to his self-authoring as a career-driven leader. His response to the uncomfortable situation has major implications for his teacher identity:

*It was sort of at the back of my mind, that I don't want this... I know I don't want to go into a school...I know I want to work with children, but I don't want to be a teacher...I wish I could pinpoint why but I can't. It would make*

*me feel better about, because I do feel a bit, I don't know if bad is the right word but I've worked for it all these years, and my family has been supportive, and all the lecturers here have been really good and I've suddenly thought no, I'm not going to do it. I wish I knew why because it would make it easier.*

Tony is understandably hesitant in telling me – a lecturer in Teacher Education – that he is going to leave teaching. His 'current' self is uncertain as to why he wants to leave, implying his position within the nursery may have created confusion and conflict between his professional and personal identity, leaving Tony to conclude that he does not want to be a teacher anymore. He anticipates and responds to any critique of his decision, highlighting an array of feelings he has felt making this difficult choice. Tony's use of the word 'suddenly' implies that it was a spur of the moment decision to leave teaching, supporting his inability to articulate reasons for this career change. Although he admits to not understanding why he has chosen to leave teaching, his next narrative brings further insight to his actions.

Implicit within Tony's account is the suggestion that the other difficult members of staff are female. However, in his next comment, he explicitly associates his discomfort with the fact that he is working within a setting where most of the staff are female:

*I am going to sound very sexist now but most people that work in this nursery are girls that are aged 18-20 and they are very difficult to work with. I find they can be. They fall out a lot. I have noticed that A LOT. The Deputy Manager said, "They are just the typical, chip on the shoulder, haven't done anything, haven't been anywhere". I've done Camp America, been travelling, been through university, which is an experience in itself. They have done school, college, here and they are so, that's it. It's as if they haven't got anything else and work is...probably when you work with children, work is your life, but it is not everything.*

Tony's response to the nursery staff and environment is strong, although he tries to lessen his reaction in different ways. His initial acknowledgement of his 'sexist' comment suggests he is trying to temper his reference to gender stereotypes in his criticism of the people he works with. However, his use of the word 'girls' to describe the female staff, could be considered 'sexist'. It is noticeable that Tony places great importance on the amount of times the other members of staff 'fall out' – recognisable as 'naturally' feminine behaviour. His use of the Deputy Manager's words – used to describe his

female work colleagues – helps to support his positioning as professional and above such immature behaviour. Moreover, Tony explicitly positions the women he works with as small-minded and provincial, their only concern being work. He does lessen the impact of his response in his acknowledgment that it may be difficult to separate life and work when working with children, tempering the powerful gender discourse that positions female teachers as ‘good mothers’.

Tony then returns to his original point that relates to the disruptive nature of the female members of staff:

*I know people might say girls together; they just fall out all the time, but not all of them obviously. Maybe a group of guys might be the same, maybe I'm being a bit general, I don't know. I just find there's always a drama, there's always something going on. Maybe that's not the right reason not to do it. I'm not saying that's what's put me off but I don't want all that.*

Again, Tony uses the term ‘girls’ to describe the young women he works with, although this time he distances himself from this description by referencing this point might be said by other ‘people’. He addresses dominant gender discourses through his acknowledgment that he may be generalising male and female teachers in his positioning of these staff members as argumentative and irrational, both stereotypical feminine characteristics that position women as subordinate. It is noticeable that Tony is hesitant in positioning ‘guys’ as superior and, as he does not expand on this point, there is an implication that he is restricted in his ability to offer an alternative response outside of the monoglossic gender matrix. His final comment is contradictory as he references how he does not want to work where ‘there is always a drama’ but explains that is not why he has chosen to leave teaching. Tony still seems confused about the reasons for his change of career. He sums up his situation in his final comments: ‘I’m the unusual one again! Always unusual!’ – self-authoring as someone who does not seem to fit into the world of the primary school.

Tony’s story is one of change and his account is illustrative of how identity production is a place of conflict and confusion. He has gone from describing himself as an Early Years Teacher: ‘It was more me’, to someone who: ‘Want[s] to work with children, but I don’t want to be a teacher’. Although Tony describes how dominant gender discourses have

positioned him as in demand and as a leader in the nursery setting, it seems that Tony is unable to feel comfortable in these powerful positions, concluding how: 'it wasn't him' – although he does not claim to understand what is.

## 8 Analysis four: Finding a more comfortable fit

In this final analysis chapter, I focus on my participants' narratives as more experienced male primary teachers. I consider how their responses to their role within the primary school and the environment itself has changed since the first time I met them. As noted in my methodology, this final analysis chapter does not feature stories from Tony, as he left the teaching profession to retrain in paediatrics, and Ryan and Nick, as they chose not to continue as participants.

The final narratives of Chris, Craig, Leo and Mark, initially take me by surprise. Although they continue to draw on monoglossic gender discourses, this time they orchestrate them differently in an alternative space of authoring. The ways they talked about themselves and their lives and the ways they presented and represented themselves were not always consistent with common sense assumptions about male primary teachers. They talk emotionally about the 'love of the job' and how they want to 'do the best for the children they teach', even though this can be difficult and frustrating at times. They are finding out how they 'fit' more comfortably within the primary school, repositioning themselves in roles that do not automatically valorise hegemonic masculine performances.

### 8.1 Workload, pressure and stress: "You have to sink or swim"

All of my participants during our final meeting describe being a male primary teacher as challenging. Unlike their earlier stories that outlined their difficulties and discomfort in the primary school, it seems that after a number of years in the figured world, these men start to accept that although teaching is hard work, the positive aspects of the job outweigh the negatives. Leo begins with telling me that he now has a better understanding of what it means to be a primary school teacher:

*L: I didn't have that many illusions about the job. I knew I wasn't going to be going home at 3.30pm, turning up at 9.30am in my dressing gown with a piece of toast! I knew it was going to be tough. There were things that caught me off guard. I didn't realise how much interaction I would have with parents and how important that would be. I definitely feel that I need more support here. I'm quite young. Talking to parents about their kids, they might be thinking, 'What on earth do you know?'*

*CW: Is that a problem for you?*

*L: It is something that I am concerned about. I've never had massive issues but it's something I'm concerned about, coming across professionally when speaking to parents.*

Leo openly shares his feelings of weaknesses and vulnerability when interacting with parents. In his account, he draws on things about himself that are significant in this situation, his age and experience, which may help him to come to terms with needing more support and his lesser status. However, Leo quickly moves on to tell me that he has not had any problems with parents in the past – anticipating and answering any potential critique of his professionalism.

Craig's description of how he now sees primary teaching is similar to Leo:

*I thought it would be a lot easier, time would be less structured. Having that responsibility, looking after a big group of kids. I didn't understand the responsibility and the workload. It's so ridiculous. It takes over your life a little bit. I see it now...Nothing can really prepare you for the daily job. You have to sink or swim, get on with it really.*

What is important here is Craig's use of the phrase, 'I see it now', as it suggests that through reflection his understanding of the primary school and his position within it has shifted. He alludes to an embodiment of a teacher habitus – noting that his chosen career is more than a job, as it becomes part of his everyday life. Craig acknowledges that the reality of day-to-day teaching is different to his original understanding but makes the point that to succeed in the job you have to manage the difficulties. Although circumstances have changed within the figured world – now it is the 'daily job' that is difficult, not his teacher-mentor – Craig still self-authors as someone who is resilient and determined to succeed, positioning himself in terms of hegemonic masculine performances. He continues with his description of what it means to him to be a teacher:

*I think teachers are completely misunderstood and underrated. People don't understand the workload, pressure and stress. It is not really acknowledged by people unless you are in it. I think teachers are massively underpaid. We are not paid anyway near enough for the hours we put into it. I don't think it's enough anyway.*

Again, Craig describes the challenges of teaching, enabling him to express his frustration with the public discourse that positions teachers with less power and status than other



‘people’. His reference to teachers’ salaries and workload, which is so central in his world, reinforces his lesser positioning as a teacher. Craig’s response in this narrative addresses non-teachers – ‘people’ who do not understand the job he does – and by doing so, he stories himself as ‘misunderstood and underrated’. Within his account, there is a sense of vulnerability in wanting to feel valued by others, reminiscent of Ryan’s story in Chapter 5. Craig’s use of the phrase, ‘unless you are in it’, implies a teacher habitus – he is developing an embodied ‘sense’ of what it really means to be a teacher and his use of the pronoun ‘we’ supports his self-authoring as a legitimate ‘field member’. He is self-authoring as a fully-fledged teacher, rather than a newcomer. However, Craig tempers his argument in his final sentence, substituting ‘we’ for ‘I’, distancing himself from the collective voice of teachers, which suggests he may not feel able to sustain this identity.

The discussion about the challenges of teaching continues as Craig describes how he is now able to cope with the pressures and stresses of the job:

*I’m quite lucky because I’m quite good at distancing myself from that [stress/pressure] because I have had a few struggles in the past and I’ve got used to taking notice of only a few things. I think I am quite good at it. I’ll talk to my dad and he’ll say ‘Why do you even care?’ You have to learn not to worry so much.*

Craig’s account clarifies his storying that addresses and answers both his historical student teacher self and his father. Reflecting on his imagined current self, he describes someone who is able to cope with the tensions inherent within teaching – distancing himself from the teacher figure who is under stress and pressure through his reliving of a conversation that he has had with his dad. Craig’s orchestration of voices from the past provide him a chance to demonstrate how he has changed from being a struggling student to a successful primary teacher in a challenging landscape. The voice of his father refers to a devaluing of the caring and emotional aspects of teaching in order to succeed and cope with the pressures. Craig self-authors as someone who has accepted this shift to a less emotional habitus, which may help him fit more comfortably into the figured world as a male primary teacher. In a constantly demanding landscape, he is able to story himself as capable and competent, protecting his own emotional well-being.

Like Craig, Chris talks about how being a primary teacher has changed for him:

*I have realised I don't know it all! I've grown into the role and built up a repertoire so I know what to expect now. Teaching is part of everyday life but the profession is ever getting harder...Pressure piles on immediately, even in your NQT year. Teaching is continually changing, it's hard to keep up, its bloody hard. The raising standards...Pressure's on head teachers as much as us. I don't think it's fair on children, on teachers, on head teachers. I'm hoping it's going to change. It will improve, hopefully it will get back to what it used to be. Don't make it so the children are under all this pressure.*

Once again, Chris's account is illustrative of a change in his self-authoring from when he was a student teacher and NQT. He is honest as he tells me that he is still developing his practice – answering his own voice from the past who was overly confident about their abilities and distancing himself from this figure. Chris describes how his role has developed over time through his increasing experience and understanding of the world of the primary school. Like Craig, he alludes to his teacher habitus in his comment that the job is part of his 'everyday life' and with this comes an understanding of the challenges he faces. Like the other participants, he talks about the difficulties of his situation, although he now considers the effect of the environment not only on himself but also on others within the primary school. He has nuanced his self-authoring to story his current imagined self as someone who cares about how others are feeling – a recognisable shift away from hegemonic masculine figures Chris evoked previously as a response to his discomfort and difficulties.

## 8.2 Role model: "Blurring boundaries between the professional and personal"

A significant aspect of Chris and Craig's final accounts is their reactions to being a role model for the children they teach. In previous interviews, Chris described himself as someone who 'gets on personally' with his class and someone whom the children 'get excited' about because he is a male teacher. This time he nuances his description of being a role model:

*I didn't realise before I started that the kids would have this attachment to me. They look up to you, you are the role model, you are the counsellor, you are the parent. It's a lot more than that. Even the tough lads, the class clowns, even the parents. It's important that the kids have that role model, seeing you every day.*

Chris's current imagined self consists of many different identities – a role model being just one. He describes how he has now realised how important a teacher can be in the lives of the children – his list of roles helping to clarify his position of influence and power. It is noticeable that the roles he describes do not signify any particular gender, in contrast to his previous self-authoring which placed importance on him being a man in school. His reference to his role as a counsellor suggests the need for Chris to demonstrate characteristics such as sensitivity and empathy as a male primary teacher, recognisable as feminine traits. The identities he references has the effect of casting Chris in 'terms of the other' – how the children and parents see him – enabling him to see himself 'from the outside' and support the development of his 'I-for-himself' that may help him address and answer images and dialogues formed within the monoglossic gender matrix differently.

Like Chris, Craig's descriptions of what it means to be a primary school teacher also references dominant gender discourses that position men as father figures and role models:

*C: The group of kids you have look to you as a role model. It takes quite a while to get used to being that figure, being responsible...Being a man, they look to you, especially at the start. It's quite hard to start with. In September they are kind of looking to you to be a father figure. That was hard to get my head around. I think now I've accepted it a bit more and perhaps I'm a bit better at it maybe.*

*CW: Is that because you are a man?*

*C: Slightly more for those children who don't have a dad about as regularly as others. Perhaps slightly more. Generally, I think all teachers are held in that light, whether they are a man or a woman.*

There is a recognition in Craig's account that being a male role model is not easy as it comes with responsibility. He stories himself as a 'father figure', acknowledging this role has been difficult to come to terms with. However, Craig's explanation that he has become 'better' at this implies that this role is something that can be learnt although he does not elaborate on how this has happened. It could be argued that he is 'navigating the field' and his role as a male primary teacher more effectively. His response positions both male and female teachers in

terms of historical familial discourses, valorising the ‘father figure’ role. Furthermore, Craig’s narrative highlights the restrictions male primary teachers have in authoring themselves within the monoglossic gender matrix and how ‘gender genres’ afford certain positions and identities for the participants, although they may not always welcome them. He continues with the ‘father figure’ theme as he describes the strong relationships that he builds with the children he teaches:

*They really look up to you. One of them even said, “I wish you were my dad”. I don’t know how I feel about that. You don’t really want to get that close to them but it is nice, it’s rewarding.*

Multiple voices are evident in what Craig tells me about his role in the primary school. In describing being a ‘father figure’, he stories himself as unsure and confused about this role. His use of the quote from one of the children illustrates how male primary teachers may have to negotiate themselves within both professional and personal boundaries that are contradictory – being a primary teacher who cares and being a man. Craig initially notes the power he gains from storying himself as a ‘father figure’ but shows hesitancy in occupying this position. His caution implies the difficulties of the contradictory nature of his identity as a male primary teacher. Craig’s ‘current’ self is rooted in the powerful gender discourses that position men in primary teaching as ‘Other’ and supports the idea of male teachers feeling under pressure to maintain a physical distance from the children they teach in order to avoid ‘gender bruising’. It is noticeable that his response does begin to address and answer voices from dominant gender discourse as he acknowledges that there are emotional gains in being a ‘father figure’ and developing close relations with children, which appear to help him address and counteract negative voices that position him as ‘Other’.

### 8.3 Future self: “Finding somewhere nice to perch”

Positioning themselves as leaders and managers remains a theme in my participant’s final narratives, although as more experienced primary teachers they are more realistic in recognising the challenge this position brings. Mark returns to telling me about his career path, situating his description in his current school where he worked for a year:

*I want to improve, get better and better. I've had lots of opportunities to develop where I am. I was offered a job for a senior management role [in another school]. 'I've got a job for you, you'll be great for it'. I felt I couldn't walk away from the job I've just started.*

In this world that he describes, Mark stories himself as someone who places importance on professional development, implying he has found a comfortable 'sense of fit' within his current school as they are 'giving him scope' to improve his practice. He talks about how he has rejected the offer of promotion, alluding to his reasons for turning the offer down and answering the Head teacher's voice that is encouraging him to apply for this new post. Mark changes course in his next comment as he explains his decision in more detail: 'For me it is not the money. I'm not doing it for that'. Here, he is continuing to address and respond to the Head teacher who offered him a job and in doing so, answer his own voice from the past that drew on productions of hegemonic masculinity to self-author as a future leader and Head teacher. In this alternative space of authoring, Mark stories himself as someone who welcomes both a challenge and professional development but also places importance on his current practice where he 'gets to teach some wonderful children'.

Like Mark, Chris, as a more experienced primary teacher, authors himself as someone interested in developing professionally. He tells me about his new job as a classroom teacher in a different school:

*I want to have an impact. I've gained so much from CPD [Continuous Professional Development] and I want to implement that there. It's a challenge for me to see what I can do to help them improve.*

Here, Chris positions himself in his new school as someone with power to make a difference, self-authoring as knowledgeable and competent. Unlike his reference to the pressure and stress that he felt in his previous school, Chris suggests that the challenges to improve things in this new environment would be more welcome due to his position as a more experienced primary teacher. I then ask him whether he has changed his perception of what it means to be a primary teacher. He describes a world where: 'schools are looked at as too much of a business'. I ask him to explain his response:

*They are managed in a particular way: "They are managers not teachers! I don't want this!" This new school hopefully will take me in a different*

*direction. They don't have the middle management. In my last school, they need to get out of the mind-set that it's a business. Unfortunately, parents are clients, they're not parents anymore. Adding value to the children. It was difficult, I was trying my hardest to say, "But we are still a school. These children matter more than data". But it's a business, you are measured on your productivity. It's a shame my journey ended like it did but I didn't think the way it was heading was right for me.*

Within Chris's self-authoring, he directly addresses the changing values around education, argued to have led to a 'remasculinisation of schooling'. The heteroglossic environment is visible in his initial exclamation where he addresses those in leadership positions at his previous school before clarifying how he has changed through engagement in activities that make him feel uneasy. His account is a direct contrast to his previous storying, where he positioned himself as aligned to hegemonic masculine displays of competition. Multiple voices are evident in Chris's concerns about how schools are changing as he addresses and responds through an imagined dialogue with those in his last school who held power. His response provides some insight into his previous lesser positioning and suggests how, even though he 'tried hard', he was unable to make his voice heard. I then ask Chris where he sees himself in 5-10 years' time:

*It's not something I thought about. Perhaps earlier on, 10 years, I might be working my way up. Realistically now, do you know? I'm not that bothered. I know teachers on the Upper Pay Scale and they're not happy. I've not got that responsibility. I'm happy doing what I'm doing, find somewhere nice to perch.*

Chris's opening line suggests that this is a new space of authoring for him. He immediately reflects on his previous figuring, noting that there has been a shift in how he is authoring himself – addressing his past self who may have wanted a leadership position and self-authoring someone who is more cautious about occupying such a responsible position in the future. Chris continues by responding to and answering gender discourses that assume men in primary schools are leaders and managers, suggesting that although he is positioned as lower status in comparison to others in the school, he is a happier person for it. His use of an analogy completes his self-authoring and illustrates how he has created a new, comfortable space where he can make a

stance against the powerful gender discourses that position him as a male primary teacher in more demanding and stressful roles.

Chris continues with the theme of valuing the children he teaches and not the data, in the context of how he is feeling about starting in a new school:

*C: This is such a big change. It's quite unsettling. I didn't think it would be but it is.*

*CW: What do you mean by 'unsettling'?*

*C: New school, will my teaching style fit in? I need that reassurance that I can teach how I teach. I'm already getting on well with the staff. They are so friendly and outgoing. Everyone is putting the school first and putting the children first. It's a new chapter.*

Within this account, Chris seems to be concerned about how he will fit into his new school. His vulnerability contrasts against his self-authoring as someone who is unwilling to change his teaching style as it positions him as competent and skilled. It is noticeable that he continues to position himself as someone who values the children above all else, again reinforcing how he is at odds with a world of achievement targets and competition – contradicting his previous descriptions of his hegemonic masculine performances as a student and NQT. His final statements demonstrate a new trajectory for Chris within the figured world, bringing possibilities to be a different type of male primary teacher. His final remark references his continual heuristic development, drawing attention to how each new situation and environment adds to his story.

Craig produces an alternative response to Chris when he asked about his career trajectory. He tells me his plans:

*I would quite like to do assistant headship. I am always quite reluctant to say it but I am quite interested in that. I would quite like to get on the Senior Leadership Team...I think I am quite, I don't want to sound arrogant but they think I am quite good. I am interested in that sort of stuff. I quite like making decisions and trying to help other people.*

Craig's hesitancy to position himself as a leader runs through his narrative. He constantly qualifies his authoring with his use of 'quite', illustrating tentativeness in his suggestions of how he sees his future self. Craig goes so far as to state that he is reluctant to sustain an idea of being a leader in school, although evoking voices of others from the primary

school help to substantiate his high status positioning. Although these voices are implicit in their power and standing, they go unnamed by Craig. He directly addresses the alternative voices that suggest an arrogance and illegitimacy in his aim to be a leader, hybridising the binarised gender discourses of care and leadership in his response. Craig is beginning to take control over the voices within the heteroglossic environment to evoke an imagined figure of a future senior leader that helps others as well as making important decisions.

Like Chris, Craig is disillusioned with current changes in primary education:

*Academy stuff worries me. They can choose the children. It worries me that they can say we don't want those kids, kids with Special Educational Needs. It's a slippery slope, sets a dangerous precedent. It does concern me a lot.*

Craig continues to see himself as 'trying to help people', this time showing concern about those children who need extra support in school. He calls on classically feminine characteristics of care and support – positioning him differently to when he was a student teacher and NQT, where heteronormative gender productions governed his self-authoring. Craig continues to reject hegemonic masculine performances as he tells me that he is not in primary teaching for financial gain:

*I love teaching, I absolutely love it! I think you have to love it, I think if you didn't love it, it would be too much work, it wouldn't justify what you get paid. I don't think you get paid any near enough for the hours you put in but I do absolutely love it. I can't imagine doing anything else now. It's amazing! It's my dream job, it's brilliant!*

Craig's final account enables him to clarify how he feels about the role of being a male primary teacher. He notes the impact of his working conditions in his reference to long hours, but makes it clear how that does not change his positive feelings about his role. Within this space of authoring, Craig has repositioned himself, reconstructing an alternative self who 'loves' the job. He has found an imagined space where he is able to go beyond hegemonic masculine performances and create his own unique way of being a male primary teacher.

These final narratives highlight how my participants' self-authoring has altered over the three years. They now tell me about the importance of supporting and caring for the



children they teach, reacting to the changing values around education and rejecting some of the hegemonic masculine performances that they previously evoked as student teachers and NQTs. They still author the figured world as being difficult at times but assert the rewards outweigh the struggles. My participants acknowledge that teaching is not easy but they are able to cope with the stresses and demands of the role in alternative ways, enacting agency to improvise with cultural resources differently than they did at the start of their career. They talk passionately about their commitment to the profession and about having a positive impact in school, negotiating the contradictions of being a man and wanting to support and care for the children they teach. Although their authoring of self still draws on the dominant gender discourses, they are now able to free themselves from discursive constraints in some ways as they offer more nuanced answers to their experiences. They are mediating some agency to find their own way of being a male primary teacher.

## 9 Discussion

The data explored in the previous four chapters tell us many things about positionality and agency. The majority of the male primary teachers' stories tell of an adherence to gender-traditional identity performances in order to 'fit' into the figured world of the primary school. The impact of dominant gender discourses on my participants is significant in its ability to support their self-authoring as powerful and important in light of being positioned as a student teacher or 'Other' in a feminised environment. As early career primary teachers, they reference struggling to mediate an alternative response to dominant gender discourse. In many cases, evocations of hegemonic masculine identities and performances brought tensions as they spoke of feeling uncomfortable in claiming gender privileges afforded to them as men. They perceived that being male overshadowed any improvements they made within their teaching practice. However, with time and experience my participants nuanced their ideas of the teacher they want to be, enacting some agency to improvise alternative responses to the constraints of their particular context. I begin this chapter by providing answers to my research questions based on the analysis of my participants' accounts of being and becoming a male primary teacher. I then review the theoretical framework, considering how the lens gave focus to their self-authoring and positionality within the figured world. Next, I consider implications for policy and practice based on my findings. I then identify limitations of my study and my next steps for research. Finally, I return to my own journey as an early career researcher, concluding with the key messages from this study.

### 9.1 Addressing the research questions

#### 9.1.1 How do early career male teachers describe their positionality in the primary school?

Holland et al. (1998) distinguish between those identities that relate to figured worlds themselves – recognised characters evoked through stories – and those that relate to our social position in the world relative to others. Positionality, according to Holland et al., is integral to developing an understanding of ourselves in relation to others,

mediated through our feelings of comfort or discomfort. The male primary teachers' positioning was a significant element in their narratives. They spoke of being positioned by their teacher-mentors, parents in school and the children they taught. In their descriptions of their everyday activities and relations, my participants told me about being positioned in both comfortable and uncomfortable positions, or in Jones's (2007) terms: 'as winners or losers'. They described feeling vulnerable and confused during their teacher training – restricted in their self-authoring as neophytes and as men. Additionally, tensions and conflict featured strongly in their stories, reflecting the pressures of school-based training and the impact their positioning had on their identity production and performances within the feminised environment of primary school.

Most of the male primary teachers spoke about their position as neophytes not fitting into the figured world. As early career teachers, their teacher-mentors and other members of school staff positioned them as a 'pest', of no consequence or 'unacceptable' in the classroom. They spoke openly about struggling with their classroom practice, 'feeling useless' but unable to ask for help from those in school. Most of my participants referenced their positioning as novices in how they explained their need for support, guidance and comfort from their teacher-mentors. Unfortunately, they did not always receive this help, leading them to describe feelings of inadequacy, vulnerability and discomfort during their training. Foucault (2000) asserts that the positioning of people occurs in relation to the embodiment of privileged and 'authentic' knowledge. The male primary teachers – newcomers to the figured world – talk about their relational position as deficient of privileged knowledge: the knowledge and expertise of how to teach effectively in the primary school. With their lack of power and status as student teachers, they are positioned as 'Other' – as lacking – a contrast to the position of their teacher-mentors as the authentic possessor of knowledge. Hence, their experiences reflect Foucault's (1976:112) point that: "power is not a thing but a relation".

Ryan alluded to his deficiencies in displaying culturally recognised privileged knowledge in his description of feeling confused about how his own judgement of his classroom practice was completely at odds with his teacher-mentor's. Moreover, Ryan's frustration with his positioning grew as he continued to receive negative feedback on

his teaching from his teacher-mentor. Alongside confusion is a feeling of disempowerment. His subordinate positioning meant that he was unable to refute claims made by his teacher-mentor about his classroom practice. His inability to exercise power as a newcomer in the primary school reflected some of the other participants' stories of not fitting into the figured world. They described struggling with their teaching, exhibiting a sense of confusion as to why they were finding their teacher training difficult, although they felt restricted in asking for help when they needed it.

As the men in my study became more aware of their positioning through participation in activities and spaces in the figured world, they evoked figured images and dialogues about themselves as men. All of the male primary teachers described their position, at one time or another, as uncomfortable, and not fitting into the figured world because of their gender. They spoke about how their teacher-mentors and other staff positioned them as 'Other' in the primary school. They described being positioned as less committed and less competent because they were men. They situated some of their struggles on placement within performances where they were: 'just doing enough to pass'. Although, there are times when the male primary teachers recognise that they could have been more organised during placement, they do not accept that they are completely to blame for their failures in the classroom.

The participants' positioning and the discomfiture they felt during their school-based placements might be explained in some way by Haywood and Mac an Ghaill's (2013) suggestion that school culture is masculinised and calls for men to be efficient and rational. My participants spoke of the constant 'pressure to do it right' and to be teaching at a 'high standard' even though they were still in training. As men, they were discursively positioned in alignment with hegemonic masculinity, leading to expectations about their ability to demonstrate efficient and effective practice in school. Thus, they struggled to fit into the figured world since, for most of them, it was difficult to realise these expectations during their training without evoking feminised performances of asking for help and support.

My participants also referenced feelings of discomfort in relation to their position as 'Other' because they were, 'the only male in school'. They described feeling ill at ease in

staffrooms, where they were unable to involve themselves in 'girly' conversations and being isolated and vulnerable as the 'butt of jokes' that were gender-related. Significantly, their positioning appears to have had a negative impact on their ability to build relationships within these spaces in the primary school: they were seemingly punished for their 'Otherness' (Francis, 2012). For some of the male primary teachers, their discomfort was also associated with a feeling of being under surveillance from staff, parents and the wider public, reflecting the research of Smedley (2007) and Burn and Pratt-Adams (2015). This was perhaps best epitomised by Chris: 'You're always being judged and looked at differently to the female members of staff'. For him, his behaviour needed to demonstrate to others that he has 'broken the mould' and he was 'not like the media portray and what people expect.' Chris' story reflected Gutting's (2005) assertion that surveillance is a significant tool for behaviour control as it de-individualises power and through 'normalising judgement' – where the judging of individuals against others occurs in relation to the 'norm' – 'abnormal' behaviours are punished, constraining behaviour to fit into what is socially acceptable. Hence, Chris had felt the need to alter his behaviour in light of his position as 'Other', explicitly distancing himself from the recognisable figure of the suspicious male teacher.

In response to their lesser positioning, the male primary teachers found some comfort and security in 'real men' positions that supported traditional images of masculinity. Despite the fact that they all described their positioning as uncomfortable at times during their early career, there was evidence that they were able to counteract their lesser positioning and self-author as more powerful and privileged in the figured world. Drawing on dominant gender discourses they were able to self-author as a future head teacher, a male role model: in demand and valued in the school. Within the men's self-authoring, alignment to powerful male figures and their associated masculinised dispositions helped to counteract being 'Other'.

Each of them used the cultural tools that were available for them as men to respond to their lesser positioning. They were able to alter the situation through what Vygotsky termed 'active adaptation' (1978:123), gathering a sense of the intentions embedded within cultural resources and using these to find a more comfortable position within the primary school. They drew on recognisable social categories that carry meaning across

multiple figured worlds – what Holland et al. call ‘cross-cutting markers’. Masculinised gender productions and performances found within the monoglossic gender matrix (Francis, 2012:6) – the gender binary system – were effective in affording them symbolic capital during their early career, creating ‘privileging spaces’ figured by specific worlds. As Holland et al. maintains these spaces provide an easier access to power and status for individuals and groups. They were able to draw on discourses that valorised hegemonic masculinity to describe themselves as in demand and sought after in primary schools, positioning themselves as high status and female teachers as subordinate.

Some of the male primary teachers figured themselves and others in relation to particular ‘standard plots’. Holland et al. assert that standard plots help people mediate their positioning in the figured world as they enable individuals and groups to compare experiences against a recognisable ‘storyline’. Some of my participants described themselves as battling to make a stand against their teacher-mentor’s condemnation of their practice and lack of support. They described how, through their strength and ‘tenaciousness’, they were able to triumph over difficulty. Through figuring their challenging experiences on placement in such a way, they were able to reposition as rational and resilient and additionally, position their teacher-mentors as ineffective and unreasonable. For example, Ryan, although his teacher-mentor ‘hammered’ him all the time, was able to reposition himself by drawing on hegemonic masculine performances and characteristics to self-identify as strong and resolute in the face of adversity. Craig was determined to succeed no matter what, positioning himself as strongminded and his teacher-mentor as irrational and unkind. Moreover, their responses to their discomfort in the figured world reflected masculinised gender performances.

### 9.1.2 To what extent do these men describe possibilities to mediate agency in their accounts of being a teacher?

Holland et al. assert that within figured worlds everyday activities and the associated power relations help people understand their positioning relative to others in terms of social relationships and distance. Moreover, they stress, “position is not fate” (p. 45) as individuals do not have to accept these social positions. Although we cannot re-create

or figure the conditions of our lives, Holland et al. maintain that there are possibilities to rearrange cultural resources that evoke social positioning. Bakhtin's dialogism demonstrates that 'voices' that exist within the figured world can constrain and position but also provide the tools to liberate individuals from these discursive positions to author the self differently. Hence, although improvised identities may be 'hard won', they show that in figured worlds that some agency is possible.

Although the male primary teachers in my study are subject to the powerful gender discourse that circulate within the social and cultural world, there was evidence that there was some element of choice in establishing identity. As student teachers with very little power in the primary school, they returned to the familiar telling of their lives according to recognised gender genres – monoglossic productions and performances of gender, such as the leader or sporty male teacher. Through responses that evoke hegemonic masculine productions and performances, they were able to find a more comfortable social position in the figured world. However, their replies, as beginning primary teachers, demonstrated a limit to their personal agency. All struggled to liberate themselves from the authoritative discourse that reduces gender identities to familiar constructions of dominant gender stereotypes and behaviours. Leo explained that his behaviour with children was not gendered, although he subsequently referenced stereotypical male interests such as super heroes and football. At that time, he was unable to offer any alternative response to those associated with dominant gender discourses. Most described their future positions as a head teachers or leaders, reflecting the gender regimes that operate within the environment that define possibilities for action, directing them into leadership as a socially and culturally recognised 'masculine' role.

As Foucault (1978) notes that discourses are linked to power, and that social power can be 'won' in how individuals take up, internalise and perform certain 'regimes of truth'. The male primary teachers in my study reflect Foucault's (1984) argument of limited agency where individuals and groups are able to oppose dominant discourses through claiming alternative discourses or 'truths' that are available in the social world. Ryan repositions himself through partaking in Connell's (2004) 'patriarchal dividend'. Within his account, his explicit references how he has been 'actively sought' by schools as he is

a man. He acknowledges the strength of dominant gender discourse and his lack of agency to improvise an alternative response to his experiences. However, as this unitary language positions Ryan with more prestige in the figured world, there is no need for him to contradict this and bring forth an alternative voice. Chris draws on the monoglossic gender account that positions men and boys as being interested in sport, especially football, to self-author a position of power amongst the children.

My participants' accounts reflect Foster and Newman's (2005) and Warwick et al.'s (2012) finding that male primary teachers are required to be successful and capable as a 'defence mechanism' to protect them from 'gender bruising'. Although he does not explicitly connect his gendered performance as a reaction to being 'Other', Chris talked about the importance of showing to others that he is not like those male teachers whose motives for teaching children are questionable. Mark's identity performances also demonstrate his opposition to being 'Other'. His contrasting descriptions of his relationships with staff explain how, as a student teacher, he felt he was unable to get involved in staff discussions as 'the only male in school', but in his first teaching job he was able to fully participate in staffroom activities, such as 'banter', and 'winding up' the Head teacher. Hence, through displays of hegemonic masculinity, he was able to 'fit' in. Tony claims his position as a leader in the nursery classroom in relation to the nursery nurses he works with, providing him access to more power and status and counteracting any alternative positioning as 'Other' in a recognised feminised environment.

Gender productions are not as straightforward as they may immediately appear, as on closer inspection gender performances may be contradictory and diverse (Francis, 2008b). Although the prevailing model of gender evoked by the male primary teachers may seem binarised, within a dialogic landscape there are identifiable complexities within their responses. However, their emotive responses to their situation in the figured world indicate the continuing difficulty of circumnavigating the centripetal forces of gender monoglossic discourse. For some of them, their remarks regarding their experiences of specific gender privileges reveal a sense of uneasiness and awkwardness in their acceptance of masculinised roles. For Nick, the ease of 'walking into a job' as a male teacher, made him feel patronised. Leo tried to distance himself from recognisable



male figures in his description of his classroom manner and Craig demonstrated some apprehension with taking on a curriculum leadership role in only his second year of teaching. Some of my participants expressed feelings of frustration and disappointment that they were restricted in their positioning, as they struggled to reference any recognition they had in relation to their teaching. Instead, they were under pressure in the figured world to conform to assumed ways of being and behaving as men.

Holland et al. assert that within the heteroglossic landscape, there are opportunities for individuals to choose a language, however it was evident that my participants were restricted in their responses to the authoritative discourse. Although some began to show some resistance to the gender monoglossic voices in their awkwardness and discomfort in claiming gender privileges, this seemed to be a temporary response. Both Tony and Nick questioned the 'gender regimes' that positioned them in socially and culturally recognised 'masculine' roles but as beginning teachers, they were unable to improvise any alternative identities. They struggled to detach themselves from the constraints of gender monoglossia that privileges them as men, unable to interact with the environment differently and offer alternate replies. For example, Tony and Ryan react to their constrained positioning in very different ways, although both are unable to mediate any alternative position. Both tell transitional stories of being and becoming a male primary teacher although their stories have very different outcomes. Their stories describe struggles and tensions that affected how they felt they were positioned in the primary school and consequently their authoring of the self. Ryan continually drew on powerful hegemonic masculine productions and performances to help him address significant others that positioned him as lesser than. His unquestioning acceptance of gender privileges helped him to find a more comfortable fit within the figured world.

Conversely, Tony was unable to feel comfortable in the assigned roles and position he had in the nursery, as 'it wasn't him'. Within his account, he moved back and forth between discourses – initially questioning and then accepting binarised roles, such as being a role model for boys and a leader. He explains how confused and uneasy he felt about fitting in, illustrative of his inability to reconcile the 'burden' of having masculinised roles imposed on him. Holland et al. argue that positionality can be moved

into the consciousness by, “ruptures of the taken-for-granted” (p. 141), disrupting automatic identity performance and enabling people to comment upon and develop new understanding in relation to their positionality. Tony’s stories illustrate this rupture in his calling into question the ‘natural’ performance of a male primary teacher, demonstrating his realisation of the limited discursive positions he has as a man in the nursery setting.

Holland et al. assert that coming to see the self as others may, within the flow of activity that is identity production – between ‘past histories’ and cultural resources in the present – lead to opportunities to improvise new ways to be and behave. However, for Tony, his new understanding of himself and the figured world meant that he was unable to fit comfortably within this world. He was unable to put together the conflictual voices that operated within the setting in such a way to provide him with possibilities for change and development. With some regret, Tony left teaching.

As early career male primary teachers, my participants struggled to enact agency to resist centripetal forces that directed them to evoke figures and discourse from the monoglossic gender matrix. Their adherence to hegemonic masculinised productions and displays as they first entered the figured world implies a lack of control over authoritative discourse in their self-authoring. From Holland et al.’s (1998:170) perspective, individuals are “condemned”, to heteroglossia – choosing a language from those of which they have been exposed. Hence, my participants addressed the world and those within it using ‘overheard’ utterances, pre-existing cultural materials, saturated with meaning from the monoglossic gender matrix. As neophytes, they were unable to develop their own voice within the dialogic environment, having limited access to a wide range of experiences as men and beginning teachers. Their lack of control within the situation inhibited their ability to improvise with the cultural signs and symbols that were available to them, resulting in evocations of hegemonic ‘gender truths’ (Francis, 2012).

### 9.1.3 How does male primary teachers' self-authoring change over time?

Male primary teachers may not be completely constrained by the discursive environment, as there is potential to mediate agency and improvise in response to the situation, albeit this process is not easy or straightforward. Holland et al. (1998) emphasise that although power relations help people understand how their relative positioning in the figured world directly relates to acts of exclusion and inclusion, they maintain that there are circumstances where people may refuse or even create new afforded positions they would rather have. Being subject to the contrasting gender discourses was difficult for all of the male primary teachers, recognised in their descriptions of battles to be repositioned and their unease with their assumed 'natural' roles as men. Holland et al., citing Bakhtin (1981), describe how individuals of greater experience are able to "rearrange, reword, rephrase, reorchestrate different voices, and through this process, develop an "authorial stance" (p. 183). It seemed that through their struggles, some of my participants were able to make a stand against voices produced within the monoglossic gender matrix, 'answering' with an alternative voice within the social environment, bringing a nuance to what it means to be a male primary teacher.

Bakhtin (1981:348) proposes that an individual's first step in developing an 'authorial stance' is the creation of internally persuasive discourse. Important within the formation of internally persuasive discourse is the internal struggle individuals may have in exposing the limitations of images and associated discourse and its influence on how they come to understand who they are. Over time, some participants were able to create internally persuasive discourse that enabled them to liberate themselves from the powerful gender discourses operating within the primary school. Through improvising with the 'tools at hand', including their history-in-person, they were able to alter the nature of their identity. Moreover, after teaching for a number of years, my participants were able to offer a broader perspective beyond their everyday experiences. They acknowledged that there were wider discourses at play, referring to how changes within education and society were affecting the experiences of primary teachers as a whole. Through talking about these things, they were able to extend their

own understanding of the figured world, becoming more confident in articulating their own ideas and values. Their struggles and successes in being and becoming male primary teachers had become a space for change and for authoring. As a result, they were able to figure their world and their own place within it differently.

Chris, reflecting on his first interview where he positioned his future self as a head teacher, explained that he would rather not pursue a leadership position in school and instead, wanted to focus on developing his classroom teaching, explicitly highlighting the importance of his support for the children in his class. His replies as a more experienced primary teacher were able to answer the figured world differently. As a beginning teacher, he placed importance on his own professional development, describing what he brought to the primary school in terms of masculinised practice. However, having spent a number of years teaching he positioned school leaders as managers not teachers, orchestrating the available voices differently to support his self-authoring as a male primary teacher who wanted to work in a school where: 'children matter more than data'.

Mark was also able to improvise with the voices that positioned him as a potential leader, albeit differently from Chris. He acknowledged that becoming a leader was a position he saw himself occupying in his later career but he clarified that in the immediate future: 'I want to improve, get better and better.' Mark's comment contrasts with his initial self-authoring demonstrating that through some resistance he was able to create internally persuasive discourse that addressed other discourse that positions male teachers as leaders. In Mark's terms, the importance of continuing to develop his pedagogy, whilst continuing to author his anticipated future self as a leader required that he orchestrate the voices in alternative ways.

Francis (2012) asserts that inconsistent gender performances have the potential to disrupt the monoglossic account of gender and produce identities and identity performances that do not fall within dominant or contradictory accounts of gender. For the male primary teachers, developing an increased awareness of themselves and the social world brought a stronger sense of agency. They were able to improvise within the discourses and practices that were available for them and liberate themselves in some way from the discursive environment, appropriating new ways to mean. My participants

spoke about how they negotiated the conflicting demands of their role. They were able to address both the dominant gender discourses that they had internalised and their own inner voices and beliefs, other internally persuasive discourses, about what was important to them about being a male primary teacher.

As more experienced teachers, they still recognised the difficulties with their developing practice but produced a more considered response to the issues they faced through their improvisations with cultural resources. Leo illustrated this when he assumed a position of 'outsideness' (Bakhtin, 1981) in his replies to the imagined voices of parents. He brought new meaning to his positioning through a realisation of how others might see him: his 'I-for-others'. Improvising with voices that addressed his history-in-person meant that he could reposition himself as developing effective practice and 'come across professionally when speaking to parents'. Through distancing himself from the immediate situation, Leo saw himself how others might see him, reframing what was happening and bringing further understanding to his sense of self.

Craig stood apart from his immediate experience to reflect on his activity and in doing so recognised that the difficulties of teaching day-to-day were different to his original understanding: 'I thought it would be a lot easier'. His account as a more experienced male primary teacher demonstrated how he was able to maintain a sense of self through his ability to manage the difficulties in his own way, improvising with the available cultural resources to self-author someone different who just 'gets on with' the workload and responsibility and has learnt 'not to worry too much'. Chris referenced his new understanding of the environment as someone with greater experience of the figured world: 'I have realised I don't know it all!' Explicit in his acknowledgement of the difficulties of being a male primary teacher, was his acceptance that he was still learning to manage the challenges that he may face. Importantly, the changes to Chris's self-authoring directed less emphasis to the hegemonic masculine characteristics he brought to the setting. Instead, he seemed more willing to acknowledge his vulnerabilities.

However, the evidence in this thesis suggests that these male primary teachers are still unable to 'fully escape' the powerful voices of gender monoglossia. Even though some of my participants were able to create internally persuasive discourse that addressed the images and discourse formed within the monoglossic gender matrix, they still

evoked standard plots and figuring that drew on hegemonic masculine identity productions and performances. In their final stories, they continued to align themselves to figures who are role models and teachers in leadership positions, although personal agency enabled them to nuance these figures within their 'space of authoring'. Given the power and status embedded within these particular cultural resources, it is not surprising that these specific discourses still hold authority within the figured world of the male primary teachers. Craig drew on male role model discourse in his explanations of how others in the primary school looked up to him but simultaneously described his feelings of unease about being positioned as a 'father figure'. His comments about the 'rewards' of the role suggest that he is on a continuing journey of repairing his self-esteem – damaged through his teacher training – as reflected in his storying. Chris evoked discourses that positioned him as a leader in relation to staff development but as a more experienced teacher, he placed a greater importance in helping others improve their pedagogy, rather than centring his descriptions on his own professional development. Both participants' replies demonstrated how, through improvisations with the available 'tools of identity', they are able to create internally persuasive discourse, negotiating with demands and desires to find different ways of being a male primary teacher.

## 9.2 Reviewing the theoretical framework

### 9.2.1 Looking beneath the 'monoglossic façade'

Combining Holland et al.'s (1998) idea of the 'self-in-practice' and Francis's (2008b; 2010; 2012) concept of gender heteroglossia afforded me a different perspective on how individual male primary teachers address the dominant productions of gender in the local environment. My chosen theoretical framework provided the lens to look beyond the monoglossic conditions that have the potential to mask heteroglossia. Instead, I was able to focus on identity construction and performances of my participants located between the 'interstices' of grand structures – gender in this case – and their local environment. Through bringing focus to self-authoring and positionality, this theoretical framework allowed me to look 'underneath' gender monoglossic

performances and instead consider how individual male primary teachers are making sense of themselves at a diverse local level.

Bakhtin's (1986) dialogism proposes that people are always in a dialogic state with the world in a dual process of being 'addressed' and 'answering', responding in a way helps them 'figure out' how things work. Holland et al. build on Bakhtin's work, maintaining that humans 'author' the world, themselves and others through addressing and answering 'voices' – words, dialects and languages of others we have overheard. Addressivity – addressing and answering others through language – provides the potential for individuals and groups to "figure it otherwise" (p. 143). All of the male primary teachers in this study were able to address voices that had positioned them as neophytes and 'Other' through an orchestration of voices produced within the monoglossic gender matrix. Evoking recognisable figures and discourses that adhered to gender binaries enabled them to story themselves as more privileged and powerful in the figured world. However, although they were able to counteract their uncomfortable positioning through addressing and answering negative voices, as student teachers and Newly Qualified Teachers they were initially restricted to hegemonic masculine productions and performances to achieve a sense of 'fit' within the field.

Holland et al. assert that the 'developmental histories' of each individual help to mediate their response to discourse and bring a diversity of meaning to cultural resources. Although it was evident that these male primary teachers drew on hegemonic masculine productions and performances to author the world, others and themselves, looking at their responses through a Figured World lens brings an insight into the multidimensional nature of their replies. Focusing on how my participants interpreted their ever-changing daily experiences drawing on the cultural resources available to make meaning, highlighted the continual adjustments made to their positioning and repositioning of themselves and others in the primary school. Their individual responses to the figured world demonstrated that they were not all interacting uniformly with the cultural resources but instead addressing their on-the-ground experiences in numerous ways. For example, Craig offers us evidence of heteroglossia in his hybridisation of the binarised gender discourses of care and leadership in his response to his future career trajectory. Nick demonstrates how he orchestrates voices that claim and reject gender

privilege, offering a response that gives weight to both in his explanation of how it feels to be positioned in demand. The way Tony constantly queried what it was that men brought to the setting that was different to women demonstrated how he created a dialogue with the dominant gender discourses. However, his questioning of binarised gender discourses was only a temporary response, as he continued to return to his 'natural' position as a privileged male teacher. Tony's account exemplifies how as relatively inexperienced teachers my participants struggled to break free from the constraints of monoglossic gender discourse.

Francis (2012) notes that an unusual aspect of the monoglossic account of gender is its ability to present itself holistically, masking evident gender heteroglossia. Furthermore, she argues that even when gender heteroglossia presents itself clearly within gender performances, the overall impression of 'monoglossic gender stability' or 'gender genres' is the preferred response of individuals and groups. Even with more experience in the figured world, the male primary teachers still conformed to 'gender genres' – recognisable gendered ways of being for these male teachers – such as being a father figure, being less emotional about the job and wanting to lead school improvement. Nevertheless, the heteroglossic environment also provided them with some possibilities to resist and reconstruct gender binaries through improvisation, although, as recognised by Holland et al., this is not an easy or straightforward process. Through struggles and resistance, some were able to create internally persuasive discourse that addressed gender norms, figuring the world and themselves differently.

As my study tracked these primary teachers over time, I was able to see how with their continued experience and broader perspectives came new ways to appropriate meaning to the cultural resources that existed within the figured world. Although this process is difficult and time-consuming – recognisable in both my participants' emotional responses to their situation and the length of time they had spent in the primary school – there was evidence that they were able to assert some agency to make an authorial stance against the dominant gender discourses. Through choosing different ways to orchestrate both monoglossic and heteroglossic voices, some were able to create internally persuasive discourse and answer the world with an alternative voice. My theoretical lens illuminated the subtle ways in which they were able to disrupt the



monoglossic gender matrix. With a growing awareness of the social relationships and material conditions in primary schools, some were able to address gender as an utterance differently, recognising the instability of what it means to be a male primary teacher. Instead of producing hegemonic masculine productions and performances as a response to the ever-changing conditions, they were able to, in Craig's words: "still hear what others are saying" whilst "forming my own opinion". Creating new responses and new positions, some authored themselves as rejecting the fast-track career trajectory in light of focusing on developing their classroom practice. They orchestrated the contrasting voices to arrive at an internally persuasive discourse that enabled them to self-author as potential leaders who placed importance in wanting to support and care for the children they teach.

### 9.2.2 The significance of *perezhivanie*

The application of Vygotsky's concept of *perezhivanie* to the male primary teachers' accounts directed focus to their emotional responses and replies used to author the self and the world. Recognising *perezhivanie* as a cultural resource, there is evidence to suggest that their emotional reaction to their environment helped them make further sense of themselves and their positioning in the figured world. It seems that being and becoming a male primary teacher is not easy and elicits deeply felt responses. Within Ryan's narratives of his time training to teach, the concept of *perezhivanie* illuminated how he came to understand his positioning as inadequate and lesser than. The emotional replies he elicits within his storying help to highlight his hegemonic masculine identity performances of strength and tenacity, producing claims that he was not going to be 'broken' by others in positions of power and that he 'came back stronger'. Craig's emotional responses to his battle with the teacher-mentor also enabled him to self-author as resilient and determined to pass his placement. Noticing *perezhivanie* adds to the understanding of how my participants developed answers to their difficulties as neophytes and men in the figured world.

Additionally, *perezhivanie* brought focus to the male primary teachers' vulnerability and confusion as they struggled to orchestrate the competing and contrasting voices that

position them as both 'Other' and in demand. Explicit in their stories was the sense of fighting to distance themselves from the negative voices that positioned them as 'Other': suspicious and unable. The concept of *perezhivanie* helped to reveal how my participants began to build any damage caused to their self-esteem in being rendered 'Other' through evocations of hegemonic masculine identity productions and performances. For example, Chris found it difficult to articulate the position he was placed in by others – the parents and the media – unable to confront those who readily accept this negative perception of male primary teachers. Instead, he explicitly described how Head teachers and children want him in their school.

*Perezhivanie* continues to be important in the male primary teachers' self-authoring as they become more experienced in the figured world. Craig expressed a strong emotional connection to his role of being a primary teacher: 'I love teaching, I absolutely love it! I think you have to love it, I think if you didn't love it, it would be too much work, it wouldn't justify what you get paid.' Importantly, he did not draw on monoglossic voices that position men in teaching as motivated by monetary rewards; instead, his emotional reactions implied that the rewards of teaching outweigh the lack of status, and relatively low pay. Chris responded emotionally to gender discourses that assume men in primary schools are leaders and managers, his answers rejecting this position to claim an alternative one that is noticeably lower status. For Chris, a senior leadership position, with its associated responsibility, felt too uncomfortable.

The addition of *perezhivanie* to the theoretical framing employed is significant as it facilitated the exploration of how these male primary teachers emotionally connect to their environment. Underplayed in Holland et al.'s theory, *perezhivanie* directed focus to my participants' emotional responses to their own and others' positioning in the primary school. Taking time to consider the significance of *perezhivanie* in their accounts demonstrated how they were making sense of their feelings of discomfort and difficulties as newcomers to the figured world and as men working in a feminised environment where particular emotional repertoires were expected from them. The recognition of *perezhivanie* in their responses illuminates how they mediated cultural resources that positioned them as valuable members of the figured world as a means to repair emotional damage that stemmed from previous difficult experiences as trainee

teachers. Acknowledging perezhivanie within their accounts highlighted how they responded to their sense of 'fit' within the primary school. Strong emotional reactions were evident in how my participants addressed voices that positioned them both in uncomfortable positions and comfortable positions, exemplified by Craig and his 'love of the job' and Ryan with his 'amazing feeling!' when he is eventually valued by others in the figured world. Recognising perezhivanie within their replies goes beyond suggestions that male primary teachers, involved in similar experiences, will react in similar ways and develop comparable understandings of the environment and self. Instead, it adds to an understanding of how male primary teachers are making sense of themselves, others and their environment.

### 9.2.3 Methodological implications

In addition, the work in this thesis contributes to a growing qualitative methodological field that applies the concept of 'multivoicedness' to interview data. Building on the current work by Tanggaard (2009), and Gillespie and Cornish (2014), who draw on Bakhtin's concept of dialogism, my methodological stance highlights the importance of conceptualising the research interview as dialogic. It directs qualitative research methodology to an analysis of Bakhtin's (1981: 348) different 'I' positions within talk: the "I-for-myself" that recognises itself unequivocally in language, identifying the "I-for-others" and the "other-in-myself." Directing focus to the multiple voices that these male primary teachers addressed within their self-authoring produced in-depth findings in relation to their ever-changing 'self-in-practice'. Leo's concern with how the parents viewed him provides an example of how my participants were able to assume a position of 'outsideness' to bring meaning to their sense of self. Evidenced within his self-authoring, Leo addresses and responds to parental voices that shape his 'I-for-others'.

The recognition that interviews are heteroglossic in nature brought focus to the development of polyphonic multivoiced knowledge about social life and personal experiences of both the male primary teachers and myself. As Tanggaard (2009:1510) notes, "All type of talk are coproduced". Her point recognises that the heteroglossic interview can never completely capture the personal and subjective nor can it seek to understand exclusively the general 'truth'. Instead, she asserts that to tell lives within

interviews the researcher must operate within a “borderline area” (p.1500). Hence, to understand people and their environments fully the researcher has to open up the language used, exploring through words and discourses how “language ‘makes’ people and produces social life” (Tinggaard, 2009:1513). Through the dialogic process of answering and addressing monoglossic and heteroglossic voices, my participants were able to appropriate new meaning to their identity performances, co-constructed both within the figured world and within the heteroglossic interview.

My discursive approach to interviewing acknowledges that the production of social knowledge created between the interviewer and participant is bound within social and historical contexts of both parties. For example, various voices appeared that related to the divergent positional identities of both the male primary teachers and myself. I may have been constructing replies as a researcher, a woman, an ITT tutor, a primary teacher or even a parent. My participants may have produced answers as students, men, primary teachers, sons, fathers and husbands. The appearance of these varied voices challenges the notion that interviews produce a single, coherent narrative and instead recognises the multivoiced nature of interviews, which enhances the quality and depth of understanding of social reality.

I am addressed as an ITT tutor in many of the men’s responses. For example, Chris was open about his ‘choosiness’ when applying for jobs as a NQT, creating between us an understanding that his gender may position him as privileged when job hunting. Tony’s reference to being ‘put at risk of failure’ during his training implies a shared understanding of the severity of the situation and his lack of control within the environment. In some replies, the men addressed me as female. For example, Ryan was explicit in reference to gender privileges he has in the job market, contrasting his positioning in reference to mine as a female. Moreover, we were all involved in the heteroglossic process of addressing our own positioning, the environment and each other, producing new social knowledge about identities.

### 9.3 Implications for policy and practice

The role of ITT providers and schools is to support teachers in developing knowledge, skills and understanding needed to teach. The construction of a more dialogical

approach in the professional development of pre-service and in-service teachers creates emphasis on their on-going 'becoming' within a figured world context. My findings suggest some implication for practice.

- Mentors' gendered perceptions of male primary teachers are an important factor in the placement experience. Interventions designed to widen the perspectives of what it means to be a male primary teacher for both student teachers and mentors would be useful, adding to discussion of how mentors could provide constructive support for early career male primary teachers.
- A Figured Worlds framework emphasises the need for early career male primary teachers to discover empowering tools to know themselves, others and their environment differently. My findings suggest that through providing varied experiences and access to a multitude of perspectives of what it means to be a primary teacher, men who choose to teach in primary schools have an opportunity to address the dominant gender discourses differently and nuance their authorship. This may be in the form of access to other male teachers who are "celebrating heteroglossic disturbances" (Francis, 2012:13) within their self-authoring and providing spaces for student teachers to step back and reflect on their experiences and their different 'I' positions they may experience whilst on school placement.

Overall, my research provides an insight into the difficulties of becoming a male primary teacher and the inevitable tensions that arise during the early stages of their career. Making space for reflecting on these tensions with both mentors and early career primary teachers may help to provide greater understanding of how to respond to gender discourse in alternative ways and find nuanced ways to be a male primary teacher.

The recent Governmental teacher recruitment and retention plans to commit structured support for teachers entering the profession acknowledges the importance of support, understanding and development of teachers in their first five years of teaching (DfE, 2017c). Currently, there is no direction as to what this support may look like. My findings

indicate that there is a need for schools and ITT providers to prioritise mentoring and support for both beginning teachers and those who have been in the profession for 3-5 years. The longitudinal nature of my data provides a new insight into how male primary teachers continually shift in their understanding of themselves and the environment over this timeframe. The current Government proposals relating to teacher retention and progression suggest that professional development is not just about “moving into a leadership role” but is about “developing the next generation of teachers to become leaders in their field, without necessarily taking on management responsibilities outside of the classroom” (DfE, 2017c). This recognition is reflected in my data where the male primary teachers, after a number of years teaching, self-authored a more nuanced identity of a ‘leader’: a figure who both demonstrates expertise in the classroom and care for the children they teach.

#### 9.4 Limitations of the study and future research

It is important to identify that my research is limited in some respects; for example, it draws on a small number of participants, some of whom did not continue to participate in the study after the initial round of interviews, and this has recognised limits in terms of generalisation (Bryman, 2012). However, the longitudinal nature of the research and conceptualisation of the interview as heteroglossic was more than sufficient to generate comprehensive data in order to provide answers to my research questions. Through the application of a theoretical framework, I was able to identify the multiple layers within the men’s talk, bringing new understanding to the positioning and repositioning of male primary teachers within the figured world. My findings do not attempt to encompass all male primary teachers’ responses. However, I always had my chosen aim at the forefront of whatever I did – understanding the complexities of being and becoming a male primary teacher – I could direct focus to the general struggles and issues they may experience at the start of their careers. Moreover, the theoretical framework was central to the achievement of my overall aim as it meant I could explore the contradictions, tensions and conflict found in the multiplicity of voices within male primary teachers’ accounts. I was able to understand how dialogue with these voices was helping to shape their identities.

As time went on, I became immersed in the participants' lives and their figured worlds. This left me wanting to know the career trajectory of those men who did not continue to participate in my study. Recruiting men who had chosen to leave the profession post-training or interviewing men who had dropped out of teacher training would add more depth to my findings. It would also help develop the support offered to trainee teachers in preparing for school placements in order to support retention on ITT programmes. Secondly, just as the male primary teachers in this study evoked masculinised gender productions and performances to find a more comfortable fit within the primary school, it would be useful to explore the heuristic development of female primary teachers. Jones (2007) asserts that women have less power within the social world and this restricts their ability to move into different spaces and construct the range of identities that men can. However, as my findings demonstrate, men who teach are still somewhat restricted within this choice due to the discursive nature of identity construction and the difficulties in resisting the powerful pull of centripetal forces when self-authoring. In order to continue to develop an understanding of the complexities of identities and provide effective support and mentoring to teachers both in training and beyond, I welcome further discussion, challenge and exploration in this area of human development.

## 9.5 Self-authoring as a researcher

Returning to my own learning journey, I had anticipated that carrying out this study might begin to alter my positioning within the world of work but it has changed me at a much more personal level. Immersing myself in my research has influenced not only my teaching of students but also how I conceptualise my own identity within my personal life. I am now more aware of how I enact and develop my identity, as a female researcher and a mother. I cannot help but reflect and question how my own and others' identities are performed and recognised in my day-to-day experiences and how I am self-authoring both at home and at work. My research is constantly informing my teaching and I am pleasantly surprised at how I am able to conceptualise identity work for my students at different levels of their understanding. Whilst teaching final year undergraduates, I am able to encourage them to explore the fluidity and contradictory nature of their own developing teacher-identity. For example, I supported a student to

reflect on her identity and her positioning as a student teacher and a mother through developing her analysis of how she was self-authoring in relation to others and the local environment. Importantly, she came to the realisation that there were different possibilities of who she is and who she may want to be. I hope that through challenging students to reflect on their identities, providing them with the time and space to consider the material and the social within their identity work, they will be able to become reflective teachers who are encouraged to find newer ways to mean for both themselves and the children they teach.

I have also felt an affinity with the male primary teachers in my study and the difficulties they experienced. There have been times during the writing of this thesis where I have struggled to write even a single paragraph, constantly doubting my ability to complete such a huge endeavour. However, I have continued to find time, space and resilience to keep going. I have been fortunate to have some expert constructive criticism that may have felt uncomfortable at the time but on reflection, it was exactly what I needed. I am extremely grateful that my supervisory team had the resilience to keep supporting me, as it has been a long and arduous journey. However, the male primary teachers in my study have provided the motivation I needed during the difficult times. They have given their time and their stories to this thesis, demonstrating both resilience and honesty in every meeting we had. They have provided such rich data, of which I am extremely grateful, and have presented a picture of positivity in an educational landscape of problems and pressures.

## 9.6 Conclusion: contribution to knowledge and messages

This research makes both theoretical and methodological contributions to the study of being and becoming a male primary teacher. First, it adds to existing research that describes how male primary teachers draw on hegemonic masculine identity productions and performances to position themselves as important in the primary school, and distance themselves from being 'Other'. This is particularly noticeable during the very early stages of their teaching career where my interviews with male primary teachers elicited strong emotional responses to their discomfort. Secondly, the research demonstrates the complexity of the cultural resources – whether school-based training



(SBT) reports and grades, past experiences and historical stories, or gender stereotypes of an 'ideal' teacher – used by these male primary teachers to mediate their positioning in schools. Moreover, through highlighting inconsistencies in their responses that relate to gender privileges, it is noticeable that essentialist assumptions about how they should 'naturally' behave creates discomfort for some. Importantly, this thesis illuminates the multiplicity and inconsistency of responses people can have to their situation and enables a greater understanding of how, through an enactment of some agency, male primary teachers may find an alternative way to be and behave that goes beyond the discursive identities found in current literature.

This thesis also contributes to a growing methodology for the analysis of qualitative data that applies the concept of 'multivoicedness' to interview data. Building on the current work by Tanggaard (2009), and Gillespie and Cornish (2014), who draw on Bakhtin's concept of dialogism, my methodological stance highlights the importance of conceptualising the research interview as dialogic. Directing focus to the multiple voices within the male primary teachers' responses to their social and cultural environment leads to in-depth findings in relation to their on-going identity production and performances. It also highlights the importance of the researcher's history-in-person where, through a uniting of past and present perspectives, new "productions of the moment", new cultural tools on which one improvises, are formed, adding further depth to the researcher's interpretation of social reality.

Continuing to gather information on how male primary teachers experience the world for themselves will help to inform the support that schools and ITT providers offer during their early careers as primary teachers. The value of using a strong and relevant theoretical framework and applying it rigorously has enabled this thesis to demonstrate that there is more than one way to be a male primary teacher. Importantly, with time and resilience from all parties, there is potential for male primary teachers to break free from the discursive constraints of the environment and 'imagine themselves otherwise'.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Primary Education Programme 2016-18 Trainee outcomes

This table shows the trainee outcomes from the local context.

<b>2016-17</b>	<b>Male %</b>		<b>Female %</b>	
<b>SBT grade</b>	<b>Undergraduate</b>	<b>Post-graduate</b>	<b>Undergraduate</b>	<b>Post-graduate</b>
1	44	41	62	56
2	56	56	35	40
3	0	11	3	4
4	0	0	0	0
WD/deferred/left No. of students	16	18	7	12

<b>2017-18</b>	<b>Male %</b>		<b>Female %</b>	
<b>SBT grade</b>	<b>Undergraduate</b>	<b>Post-graduate</b>	<b>Undergraduate</b>	<b>Post-graduate</b>
1	43	31	63	50
2	39	59	33	45
3	2	10	2	4
4	1	0	0	1
WD/deferred/left No. of students	12	15	6	14

## Appendix 2: DfE (2017) School workforce in England, November 2016

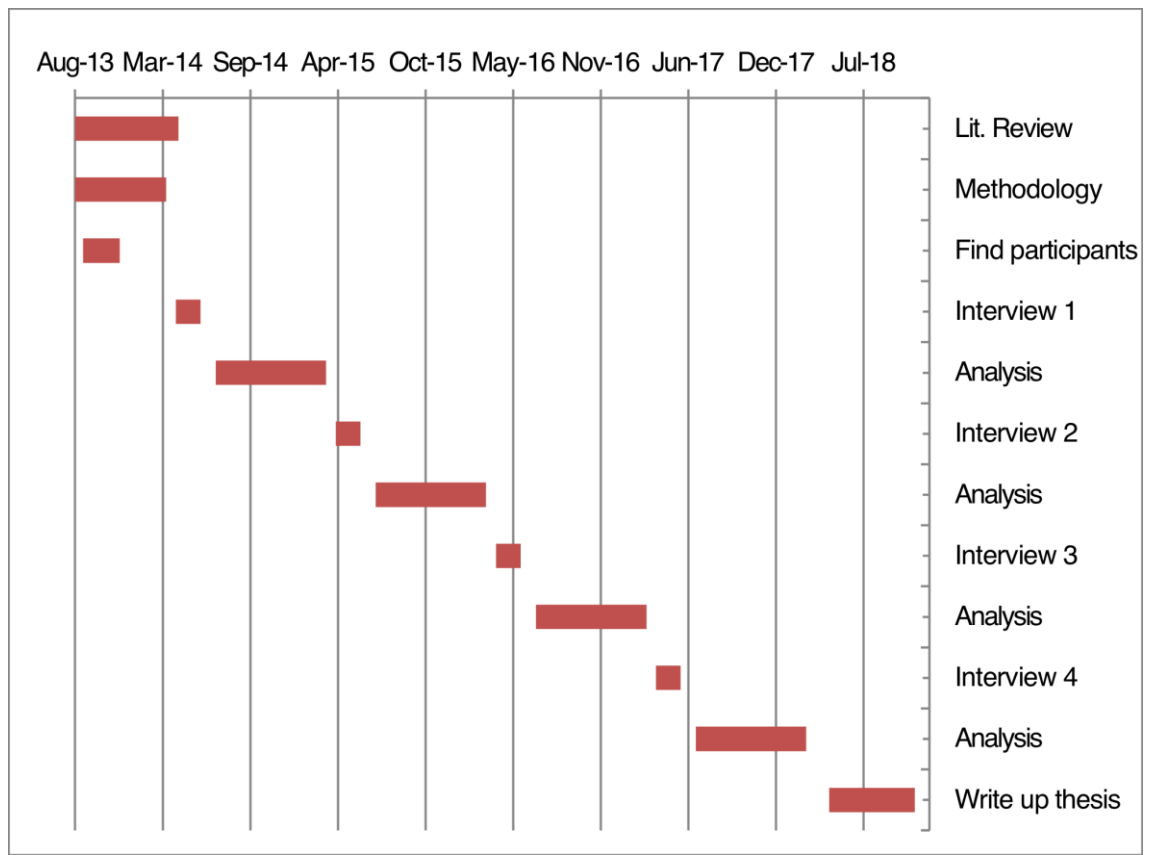
LA MAINTAINED NURSERY AND PRIMARY ALL AGES AVERAGE SALARY		PRIMARY ACADEMIES ALL AGES AVERAGE SALARY	
Teachers of all grades both leadership and classroom.		Teachers of all grades both leadership and classroom.	
MEN	WOMEN	MEN	WOMEN
£38,900	£37,100	£38,900	£36,100
Full and part-time regular head teachers		Full and part-time regular head teachers	
£63,700	£61,900	£68,300	£64,300
Full and part-time regular teachers		Full and part-time regular teachers	
£38,900	£37,100	£38,900	£36,100

Table 1: Comparison of full and part-time regular school teachers (Includes teachers of all grades both leadership and classroom) with full and part-time regular leadership teachers (Includes heads, deputy, assistant heads and advisory teachers) in state funded schools by sector and gender.

LA MAINTAINED NURSERY AND PRIMARY				PRIMARY ACADEMIES			
School teachers		Leadership teachers		School teachers		Leadership teachers	
Men (Thousands)	Women (Thousands)	Men (Thousands)	Women (Thousands)	Men (Thousands)	Women (Thousands)	Men (Thousands)	Women (Thousands)
20.2 (%)	143.1	7.1	26.2	6.4	41.6	2.3	7.8

Table 2: Full and part-time regular teachers, head teachers and leaders in state funded schools and academies by salary bands, average salary, sector, gender and age. November 2016

### Appendix 3: Gantt chart



## Appendix 4: Data Protection Audit

Ownership and responsibility	Recommended actions & relevant guidance	Action taken/explanation of why not being done
Is it clear who the owner is for all data in the research?	If no, clarify who is responsible for which data. If no, develop an information map	
If the data is about a living, identifiable individual, are arrangements in place to ensure that it is accurate and up-to-date?	Develop a retention schedule for the data.	
If the data is about a living, identifiable individual, are arrangements in place to suspend using data about a particular individual if they ask us to do so?	Delete data on individual if necessary	
If the research contains sensitive data, including data about living, identifiable individuals, is access restricted to only those who need to see it?	If no, put the necessary arrangements in place.	
Are measures in place to prevent unauthorised access or changes to the data? This could be by an authorised user.	If no, put the necessary arrangements in place.	
Are measures in place to prevent the loss of the data?	Backup data regularly.	

## Appendix 5: Study information sheet

### **Study Information Sheet**

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this Study. The Information Sheet explains what the Study is about and how I would like you to take part in it.

The purpose of the Study is to find out why men go into primary teaching, how they develop their identities within the primary school and which identities men feel are important to becoming successful within their career.

In order to find out more about your experience within primary schools I will be interviewing you 4 times over a 3 year period, between May and June. If you agree to this, the interview will be audio recorded and will last approximately 45 minutes. For you to take part in this study the consent of your Head teacher/ Head of Primary Programmes will be required. They will be contacted as soon as you consent to take part.

You will be given the opportunity to feedback on the research and any comments and considerations will be taken into account. The information provided by you in the interview will be used for research purposes. It will not be used in a manner which would allow identification of you.

At the end of the Study, anonymised research data will be archived at the UK Data Archive in order to make it available to other researchers in line with current data-sharing practices. The Study has been considered by an Institutional Ethics Committee at Manchester Metropolitan University and has been given a favourable review.

Once again, we would like to thank you for agreeing to take part in this Study. If you have any questions about the research at any stage, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Corinne Woodfine

C.Woodfine@mmu.ac.uk

Tel:

## Appendix 6: Interview consent form

### Consent Agreement

- I, the undersigned, have read and understood the Study Information Sheet provided by Corinne Woodfine.
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the Study.
- I have understood that taking part in the Study will include being interviewed and audio recorded.
- I have been given adequate time to consider my decision and I agree to take part in the Study.
- I understand that my personal details, such as name and employer, will not be revealed to people outside the Study.
- I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages and other research outputs but my name will not be used.
- I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any material related to this Study to Corinne Woodfine.
- I agree that I can withdraw from the Study at any time and I will not be asked any questions about why I no longer want to take part.

Name of Participant:

Date:

Researcher Signature: Corinne Woodfine

Date:

(Based on an example from Bryman, 2012)



## Appendix 7: Interview guides

### Interview #1 Summer 2014

1. Tell me about your journey into teaching so far
2. Tell me about the relationships you have developed within schools during your teaching.
3. Are any of these more important to you than others? If so, why is that?
4. How do you think people see you on the schools you have taught in? Is this how you see yourself? Want to be seen?
5. Where do you want to be in 5 years from now? 10 years?
6. How does it make you feel being in a minority in a primary school? What difference does it make?
7. Have you mentioned anything here that you feel was influenced by my position as a researcher and tutor? Is there anything else you would like to say that you haven't had a chance to?

### Interview #2 June/July 2015

1. Choose a picture that sums up your year (I will be setting up the iPad so gives them time to choose). Have some time to think about why this may be the case and then ask to explain why they have chosen the picture and what significance it has.
2. Can you tell me about your experiences at the start of the year? How did you feel? How did people see you (both staff, parents and children)? (Use this question to set the context of the school/ class/ role they have been in this year).
3. Has your year been what you expected it to be? Why? What makes you think that?
4. How do you feel about being a teacher now? Why?
5. How do you think people see you now? Has their perception changed? What experience(s) makes you think this is the case?

Add to each interview questions that are individual to the participant. Use the phrase...in your last interview you said...

### Interview #3 June/July 2016

1. What does it now mean to you to be a primary teacher? How has this changed since we first met?
2. How do you feel about the support you have been given in order to become a primary school teacher?

3. How do you feel about primary teaching now compared to when you first embarked on this career? Is there anything you want to change?
4. If you had to do it all again, would you do anything differently?

## Appendix 8: Example of initial analysis using Gee's (2012) 'Ideal' Discourse Analysis

### Ryan: Interview 1

#### **Social languages and intertextuality**

- 1. What social languages are involved? What sorts of grammatical patterns indicate this? Are different social languages mixed? How so?*

Social language of student teacher: 'interim'; 'matrix'; 'RoLo's'; 'preparation days'; practising; learning by our mistakes

Social language of geographical location/ geographical colloquialisms: 'thinking crumbs'; 'wishy-washy'; 'moving the goal posts'; shoddy

Social language of education: 'higher and lower ability'; TA; 'quite candid in my approach';

Use of geographical colloquialisms as a social language is used when Ryan is feeling aggrieved and has a problem with what he was experiencing.

Uses words and phrases throughout the interview that indicate his surprise about where he is now:

'unbelievable'; amazing; fantastic; wonderful; achievement; proud; absolutely amazing

- 2 What social situated identities and activities do these social language enact?*

Identity of a student teacher that needs support and guidance, Also use of technical language demonstrates to me as a tutor that he knows and understands the processes of assessment whilst on placement. Uses these terms without any explanation as does not feel the need to due to my position.

When using colloquialisms Ryan is describing difficult experiences and critiquing the support or the processes involved in his placement. Reverting to geographical colloquialisms may make Ryan feel more confident, stronger in using language, knowing that he was critiquing the course I work on. Made him feel safe and familiar?

Surprised there is not so much educational language in this interview. It does occur when Ryan is describing where he wants to be in 5 and 10 years' time. Indicates that he knows what pressures and measures he may encounter. Even though he has a job he is unsure if this is the career for him due to the 'paperwork for Ofsted to show evidence'. He believes that this will impact on his work/life balance.

*3 What Discourses are involved? How is 'stuff' other than language (mind stuff, emotional stuff, world stuff, interactional stuff and non-language symbol systems) relevant in indicating socially situated identities and activities?*

#### Discourses of masculinity

**Emotional stuff involved:** when describing manual labour jobs Ryan is very forthright and quite harsh with the language he chooses (hated; stunk; disgusting; horrible; stuck in a rut); 'mum proud as anything'; male tutor 'destroying me all the time'; 'I was not going to be defeated'; 'coming back stronger'; 'definitely a stigma with it' (EY); 'glorified babysitting' (stated by the other males on the course about EY);

**Mind stuff involved:** opportunity to take stock of life once made redundant for the final time; 'don't take offence' when wants to prove HT wrong about 'happily plodding along in life' and being a lazy boy; male tutor 'playing mind games with me'; 'tried to break me'; 'a lesser person would have quit'.

**World stuff:** 'going back to the EY experience' (bothered him being male); 'it's discrimination but that's the way it is' (about being actively sought for a job); government drives for more males, wrongly or rightly'; 'I researched this so I didn't go into it blind. I know there was going to be demand at the end of it' (how he felt about the job).

**Non-language symbols:** men not being in early years classrooms; feeling has to provide for the family regarding wages; making family proud through teaching (not manual labouring) as different status of job; lazy males; other male staff battling Ryan; positive discrimination of males in primary schools.

#### Discourses of student teacher

**Emotional stuff involved:** 'I've done it and achieved (in relation to getting a job); 'there is no way I can do this' (how Ryan felt about teaching at first); 'not very good at giving adults these' (2 stars and a wish-in relation to final placement); 'I had put how I was feeling' (in weekly reviews from final placement); 'very supportive' (uni tutor); 'that's how bad I felt about it' (the final report as he thinks he has failed); 'I felt valued...already' (after having a hug in the interview); 'I felt absolutely useless'; 'I felt I'm not capable' (both in relation to a TA in year 3); 'they have faith in me' (from interview).

**Mind stuff involved:** I realised I am capable and I've got there'; 'not knowing if I had passed' (in discussion with the male teacher from final placement); 'I feel like I'm a replicator of what you do all the time' (in relation to the final class teacher); 'I felt like my individuality was taken away' (during final placement); 'It's only me that will get ill

or poorly from it' (when speaking about being stressed about teaching; 'you won't get out of here alive!' (from staff from a special school).

**World stuff:** 'you agreed to have me in there and you need to support me'; 'it's all about money' (rather than developing new teacher workforce); 'we're meant to be practicing and learning by our mistakes' (what Ryan believes should happen on placement and in university sessions with peers); 'I want 110% from you. If you don't you'll be out of the door!' (From a HT on placement to a number of students including Ryan); 'some students were not allowed into the staffroom'.

**Interactional stuff:** 'he never picked up on the good things that I did'; 'anything I could be given credit for was taken away'; was always picking on the negatives all of the time. All this was in relation to the class teacher in the final placement. 'I've been thrown in at the deep end' (in relation to not given time to prepare a lesson in Y3); 'the proper, genuine support that's there all the time' (is the most importance aspect of relationships to Ryan; 'we are just a pest to them really' (what he thinks most teachers and schools feel about having students); 'they never approach you to say is there anything we can do?' (they being members of staff where the placement is being held); 'I wouldn't dare go with any problems' (staff); 'you don't want to upset the apple cart' (when speaking about micro relationships in school); 'don't really acknowledge you at all'.

**Non-language symbols:** weakness of student always needing support; need to feel valued by other members of staff; doubting ability; not able to develop individuality; schools don't want students as they only do it for the money; harsh words from HT; exclusion from staffrooms and other elements such as decisions about reports.

*4. In considering this language, what sorts of relationships among different Discourses are involved (institutionally, in society, or historically)? How are different Discourses aligned or in contention here?*

Institutional relationships: Difference in status between student teachers and qualified members of staff (Class teachers, TA; HT). Acknowledging that students do not have much to do with HT due to their status and when they do, they are harsh. Supportive university relationships to students. Schools doing this for the money; pressure of paperwork from Ofsted.

Societal relationships: EY being an unsuitable space for male teachers due to the babysitting aspect and the physicality of the EY teacher role; males being breadwinner for the family; men being actively sought for male teacher role; men being lazy.

Historical relationships: relationship between students and the class teacher based on students previously; knowing wanted to do more than manual labour as a job; proving others that he could become a teacher; making family proud.

*5. What Conversations are relevant to understanding this language and to what Conversations does it contribute?*

Conversations: stigmatisation of men in EY; hegemonic masculinity; jobs for the boys; making male teachers vulnerable.

*6. How does intertextuality work in the text? In what ways does the text quote, allude to, or otherwise borrow words from other oral or written sources? What function does this serve in the text?*

-Friend who worked in a brick factory that said he worked for 3 days a week... 'well, I thought that sounded good...fantastic hours and good pay'. Providing a reason why he would work in such a job.

-High school HT saying 'if Ryan doesn't buck his ideas up he will quite happily plod along in life'. Indicating to me (his family and himself) how far he has come from there having secured a job in teaching.

-Friends have said 'why would I want to work with children and I have said the amount of work that goes into it? Indicates how others may have thought Ryan was not capable of working hard at a job.

Class teachers said 'Ryan is a nice person, Ryan is this, blah, blah, blah', illustrating the rigorousness of assessment of Ryan during his placements before the final one.

-The final class teacher says 'you need to do this, you've not done this, done that' and Ryan uses this to demonstrate the difference between this class teacher and the previous ones and how he wasn't used to this level of scrutiny.

-Assessment of class teaching by Class Mentor was not systematically written down but made up, suggests this happened to other students as well as himself.

-After interim of final placement Ryan alludes to the fact the Class Mentor changed in attitude towards him (relaxing with him) and suggests this is because his University Tutor 'gave them a grilling' and 'told him things straight' (that he was capable and being successful). He also quotes from the Rolo that 'I was very tenacious and a lesser person would have quit', indicating his strength.

-Describing his battle with the TA in the final placement Ryan states that the teacher and TA said to him on his rolo 'that the only reason the kids behaved was because this lady was staring at them and keeping them on track.' This then is refuted by Ryan through comparing it to teaching a lesson without the TA and the rolo stated 'that they always behaved well because they are a high ability class.' So he believes he wasn't given credit for what he was achieving, being valued as a teacher.

-In relation to staff not wanting students Ryan quotes from a conversation with his final class teacher. 'He said that if we don't something, I can't think what it was, send my report back or something, that the school doesn't get paid.'

- 'Comments in the final report showed the way I was improving, 'demonstrating tenacity', again proving that Ryan to me that he was being successful.

-His worry that he had not passed his final placement and the lack of understanding from the class teacher shown in the way the teacher says 'oh yeah, yeah, you've passed.'

-conversation with class teacher regarding changing his planning to fit with his; 'I feel like I am a replicator of what you do all the time. He's like oh, no, no! It's not about that. Well, every time I do my plans you say well this is how I would have done it. So I adjust them.'

-Talking about being low status (we were just like TA's) and didn't need lesson plans. In the second year placement...' I remember saying to the guy can I see some of your lesson plans and he said I don't do lesson plans unless Ofsted are coming'

-Knowing that his experiences with class teachers not checking progress was familiar to others-legitimises it: 'I've discussed this with other students and it depends on who you've had.'

### **Situated Meanings**

1. *What situated meanings for words/phrases used can be attributed to their 'author'? (Keep in mind the point of view of the Discourse in which words were used)*

Discourse in which they were used: student teacher; male teacher; hegemonic masculinity

Struggle words: difficult, awkward, get ill, wouldn't dare, absolutely useless, thrown in at the deep end, took me back a bit, you need to support me

These words are used when talking about his experiences on placement before he then chooses to use the battle words. So admitting that it wasn't easy through the training but recognises he 'has achieved and capable' but his reaction to the difficulties were to see them as a battle.

Battle words: destroying, not defeated, grilling, break me, aggressive, barking, not get out of here alive, hammering me, a lesser person would have quit, come back stronger

The main battle here is with the more experienced male teachers Ryan has encountered over the course of training. He saw this as an experience that he had to get through, using his strength and 'tenacity' to do so.

Low status words: 'pecking order', 'pest', don't want me there, haven't got time for me, couldn't be placed, wishy-washy

As a student teacher, Ryan is aware that some class teachers do not want a student and only do it for the payment. Does this then lead to him thinking that it is going to be a struggle due to his low status and he then needs the battle mentality? This contrasts sharply with the story regarding his employment where he is welcomed with open-arms and made to feel wanted. This demonstrates he didn't feel wanted as a student teacher.

2. *What situated meanings for words/phrases used can be attributed to those listening? (Keep in mind the point of view of the Discourse in which words were used)*

Discourses of males doing the bare minimum, being lazy and not being organised for placement. Also blaming others for struggle during placement (not checking paperwork, making up assessment).

Discourse of schools not being supportive of students and not wanting them.

3. *What situated meanings for words/phrases used can be attributed to those listening from the point of view of **other** Discourses than the ones in which the words were uttered?*

Local context from me as an ITE Tutor is my awareness of male student teachers struggling on placement (local data) suggesting the Discourse of a weak male. Also local context in regards to schools and class teachers being adverse to having students in their classrooms, making life more difficult and being less than supportive. Conversely I have also know that students have very supportive placements with both schools and class teachers going out of their way to ensure students are well supported.

### **Figured Worlds as Tools of Inquiry**

- A. *What figured worlds are relevant here? What assumptions am I making about how people feel, value, and believe, consciously or not, in order to talk, act and interact in this way?*



Ryan feels unwanted by schools and class teachers. He feels undervalued and of a low status. This is seen within his stories of class teachers being kind but unsupportive, not checking work, the TA being of a higher status in relation to noise levels in the classroom, other stories of students being asked to leave the staffroom or not eating lunch in there. Not being acknowledged by some staff. Expectations of HT's and class teachers unrealistic (110%), giving Ryan an unplanned session to teach last minute. Not being able to go and discuss problems, not upsetting the status quo (applecart). No one in school to talk to about issues.

Contrasting with his being 'actively sought' for a job. They want him and have faith in him and his ability. Given a hug at the end of the interview. Ryan attributes the sole reason for this change in status/ identity is due to the school wanting a male teacher. He is acutely aware of the government's drive to recruit more males and assumes that the disproportionate amount of men applying for primary jobs will automatically give him the job. Very clear that he is in demand for jobs being male. Unsure whether male role models is important for boys.

*B. Are there differences here between the figured worlds that are affecting espoused beliefs and those that are affecting individual actions and practices? What figured worlds are being used here to make value judgements about oneself or others?*

Figured world that he is lazy, does the bare minimum. However, criticises the teachers and university tutors who do the same. Also mentions other males on course that see it as easy and do nothing but then drop out. Ryan does not do that though and this is where the battle commences. He is not going to give into this culture of happily plodding along in life.

Valued judgements he makes are that he is more mature (would have walked out of it all) and compares himself to the younger males on the course. He suggests that as they lack experience they are 'more cocky' and picky about which job to take and also they thought it was going to be an easy life for 4 years. With his experiences in life, he is able to understand the importance of getting a job and working hard (initial discussion about previous jobs).

Figured world of being strong: 'It only slips if you allow it to slip'; 'the mind is such a strong thing'; battle words. Ryan attributes this strength to being a Christian, being older, and life experiences.

Valued by staff in schools due to positive outlook, smiling, pleasant, 'delightful young man'. So does he still see himself as young? Also valued as a male (in relation to getting a job).

C. *How consistent are the figured worlds here? Are they competing or conflicting figured worlds at play? Whose interests are the figured worlds representing?*

- Figured world of strength, masculinity and maturity within stories about previous work. Within this figured world Ryan uses these attributes to 'turn his life around, career-wise'.
- Figured world of weakness, struggle and in need of support being a student teacher on placement. Needing to be valued and wanted by others. Lacking in confidence. Uses these attributes to pass the blame of failure onto others with higher status.
- Figured world of being lazy, un-prepared, lacking organisation. Relates this to male student teachers and how this has changed for Ryan through surviving the battle.

D. *What other figured worlds are related to the ones most active here? Are there 'master figured worlds' at work?*

Male HE students 'doing just enough to get by' (Gammie et al, 2001)

Student teachers

Males displaying hegemonic masculinity in feminised environment

Male privilege

E. *What sort of texts, media, experiences, interactions and/or institutions could have given rise to these figured worlds?*

Newspaper articles; governmental recruitment policy; experiences of other males on the course; experiences at school as a pupil; listening to stories from other student teachers about placement.

F. *How are the relevant figured worlds here helping to reproduce, transform, or create social, cultural, institutional, and political relationships? What Discourses and Conversations are these figured worlds helping to reproduce, transform or create?*

Transforming the Conversation that male HE students, especially UG teaching students, are weaker than females and less inclined to do well on placement. Through engagement within a battle to counteract this Conversation and Discourse of being

lazy and plodding along, success is achieved. Position of male underachieving student changed through this battle. Success is acknowledged through the getting a job.

Creates a nuanced version of the figured world of hegemonic masculinity within a female-dominated environment. Battle cries suggest this need to display masculine traits of strength and tenacity but conversely suggests, through the experience of being hugged at the end of an interview that needs to be cared about and wanted. Reproduces the Conversation of having a bruised identity. But is this bruising due to the changes in status from being a male at work to the low status of being a student teacher? Different reason for the bruising in comparison to the research. Research suggests the bruising stems from tokenistic nature of male role model rhetoric not being acknowledged by all in the figured world that privileges men. Bruising here may be due to being a mature student teacher who has worked in masculine environments previously.

**Building tasks: Given what Ryan has said and how it was said...**

- i. *Significance: what things and which people in this context are relevant and significant and in what ways are they significant? How is the speaker trying to give significance to things?*

Things that are significant are assessment tools such as Rolo's and reports. Ryan directly quotes from these to demonstrate that he is more successful than his circumstances tell us. Paperwork comes up quite a lot in a negative way, not given lesson plans, not checked by tutors, will do the bare minimum, Ofsted checking this. Ryan seems to be battling against this aspect of the job and even when he has now got a job this aspect may cause him to be less committed.

People who are significant are his class mentors as this is where the support varies. His stories are centred around these people and the children are not mentioned at all in many stories. Other staff, HT and TA's are also important in the context of status and relationships. The people that are significant are so due to the conflict that Ryan has with them, those that he does not have any conflict with are briefly mentioned if at all.

New school staff are significant in the fact that Ryan feels that they value him already. His story around this is detailed and this detail demonstrates the compromises the school made in order to interview him.

- ii. *Practices (Activities): What practice(s) are relevant in this context and how are they being enacted?*

Manual labour stories at the beginning Ryan uses to demonstrate how he has changed and how he and others are proud of him now.

Activities relating to support with and checking paperwork feature throughout this narrative. Ryan compares tutors against this activity and compares this activity with other students.

The activity of hugging Ryan after the interview. This is wholly significant as for Ryan it is a sign that the staff in the new school value him as a teacher and he is offered equal status.

The practice of physical contact in EY setting is significant here as it causes Ryan to feel awkward not for any other reason but the parents and what they might think.

Activity of positive discrimination in relation to males being actively sought for jobs. Ryan recognises the moral issue here but accepts that it happens in every workplace (story about his own part-time work) and relates this to the importance of the practice of gaining a job.

*iii. Identities: What identity or identities (for the speaker/ listener/ others depicted) are relevant in this context?*

Identity of breadwinner (when Ryan talks about getting money but only enough to live on. He relates it directly to family matters, holiday, broken washing machine).

Identity of student teacher (Throughout the stories are problems encountered by Ryan due to lack of support from Class Mentors. Also very important throughout the stories is the fact that students are seen as lower status in school and are treated as such, no handshake, no support, not given any leeway with own ideas).

Identity of an employed teacher (by getting a job status is raised and value is given).

Identity of controlling class mentor (causes Ryan to feel under pressure and not able to develop his own teaching style).

Identity of aggressive staff (TA, HT) who create conflict with Ryan and make him feel alienated from the work he is doing. Their aggressive nature cause Ryan to want to fight back and show them what he is capable of.

Identity of male students (lazy, not willing to put the work in, give up too easily).

*iv. Relationships: What relationships are relevant in this context and how are they being enacted, recruited and used?*

Relationship between the final class mentor and Ryan dominates the narrative. It shows how Ryan has been able to battle through the problems within this relationship and there is a positive end to it, he gets a job.

Relationship with University Tutor was supportive and she 'gave them a grilling', demonstrating support for Ryan and valuing his contribution. This then in extended into the new school and how they have already behaved towards Ryan, reconfirming his value as a teacher.

v. *Politics: What social goods are relevant and at stake in this context and how are they being distributed or how is their distribution being viewed?*

Social goods are the assessments of Ryan's teaching. These assessments mean the difference between passing and failing the course and what the battle is for.

Misunderstandings surround these assessment and the amount of credence these assessment has varies, causing problems for Ryan as he places, quite unsurprisingly, a great amount upon these assessments. He conflicts with other members of staff about these assessments and does not always understand their judgements within them.

Social goods are also the non-verbal contact Ryan uses to indicate status and value to his identity. He talks about the hug from the new school but also whenever he goes into a new placement he offers a handshake, which contrasts with being 'never approached' by staff.

vi. *Connections: What are the relevant connections and disconnections between things and people in this context and how are these connections and disconnections being made or implied?*

Connections between Ryan and University Tutor as he feels they are on his side (gave them a grilling, Ryan is a lovely young man)). Also other students (but not the males) as they have had similar experiences as Ryan in relation to lack of support and being of low status (pecking order, not in the staffroom). Final connection being with the staff from the new school (gave him confidence, they want him, they have faith in him and his ability-gave a hug).

Disconnections between Ryan and Class Mentors and other staff relating to assessment of teaching and noise levels within the classroom. Also disconnections between Ryan and other males on his course. Ryan tells a story about how he is connected to a member of staff (TA) and then through questioning her input to children she is then disconnected with him (turned totally cold with me). He has 'no idea' why. He does offer a story about how she has complained about noise levels as an answer to why she may be like this.

- vii. *Signs, symbols and knowledge: What are the relevant sign systems (languages/ social languages) and forms of knowledge (ways of knowing) that are relevant in this context and how are they used and privileged or disprivileged?*

Privileged signs and symbols are physical contact with other members of staff to indicate equal status and position (handshake/ hug). Also by being male sought for jobs where he was valued, although was not valued before by others (bruised identity?) but had expected to be, as 'I knew from the beginning I had researched this so I didn't go into it blind. I knew there was going to be a demand at the end of it'. Also being able to be independent with teaching and pedagogy (taken away from him by members of staff (TA and Class mentor)).

Disprivileged signs and symbols are being a student teacher who needs support. Not going to others with his troubles and worries. Sign of weakness here but wanted class mentors to pick this up subconsciously and support him. Also being a student teacher restricts spaces in school (staffroom). Being a female student and applying for jobs less privileged as he will get the job before them 'if you and I go for the same job, with same qualifications, I am going to get the job.'

## Appendix 9: Example of data analysis through operationalising 'Figured Worlds'

CW: Tell me about your journey into teaching.

R: Do you want me to begin at the beginning? I'll start at 13 when I was in high school, I was doing quite well but when I look back now my dad had his own company I think I thought that was what I was going to be doing. I was going to be the manager there. The last few years of high school I got distracted and didn't do as well as I should have done and with that in mind I think, so that's what happened I left school at 16, started working for my dad and after 18 months I was made redundant. Told on a Monday and got rid of me on a Friday. Where I work, across from that was another place offering manual labour work, which I didn't mind at the time, which I was quite happy doing. It had an opportunity, which was temporary over the road, and I went there straight away and was there for 8 years because I needed the money. I hated the, hated the, I don't know if I did, but now I look back at it, I was working with animal feed, it was horrible, **I can still smell it now. It stunk, it's disgusting.** With starches and dust and horrible environments and noisy. And I had a friend that worked in a brick factory and he used to tell us that he worked for 3 days a week and well, I thought that sounds good, I like the sound of that, so I said alright, get us a job there, tongue in cheek as you do, and a job came up and I ended up getting a job there. I was there for 10 years. **So fantastic hours and good pay** but again I didn't want to be there when I was 50, I didn't want to be there when I was 40. It was not for me although in the meantime I got a mortgage and all the things that go with that so I was stuck in a rut so I wasn't going anywhere. So in 2008, they gave me the chance to be made redundant and they paid me a nice sum of money, which I thought, was fantastic and that was the turning point. It gave me the opportunity to stake stock and chat to people that were important in my life and see where I was going with it. **That's when I decided that I would embark on the opportunity. I had to get on the course by doing an access course and to look at doing primary school teaching. Unbelievable, unbelievable.**

CW: Why do you say unbelievable?

R: Because if I look back to when I was at school and some of the reports that I got and everything, it's just like...they're probably right. **The head teacher saying things that stand out like 'if DD doesn't buck his ideas up he will quite happily plod along in life', which was a fair comment at the time; don't take offence as at the time it was right. I don't know where he is now and I'm not the type of person to rub it in his face but if he...for myself, my own pride that I've done it.** Turned my life around in a lot of ways, career-wise.

CW: what have family and friends thought about your change in career?

R: **Amazing, fantastic, especially my mum, absolutely. She is proud as anything.**

**Commented [CW1]:** Dynamic/emotive language

**Commented [CW2]:** positioning through referencing cultural models?

**Commented [CW3]:** positions teaching and teachers as powerful figures.

**Commented [CW4]:** Authoring the head teacher (significant figure with power and status) as someone who has made an incorrect judgement on Ryan and although he states he doesn't want to rub it in his face he is by saying this. He asks me to not take offence with the voice of the head teacher. Multivoicedness he addresses voices from the past, his history-in-person, that had positioned him as lazy and with very little status and power

**Commented [CW5]:** Using voices of others to help position self as important and high status.

CW: Is there anybody in your circle of friends that have been negative?

R: A lot of people have said why would I want to work with children and I have said the amount of work that goes into it. I think I have grown into it the more I have done it. I remember in the first year thinking, I was in year 1, thinking they're just playing all the time and the chairs are that low down, getting a numb bum all the time, thinking I don't know if I want to do this but from then onwards I was always in higher years and as I've done it and achieved I realised that I am capable and I've got there and I've got a job last Thursday, which was like amazing.

Commented [CW6]: Addressing negative voices of others  
Commented [CW7]: Habitus?

Commented [CW8]: Self-authoring

CW: Can you tell me about your experiences over the course?

R: I just think it's the development over the years. First, going in and thinking crumbs, there is no way I can do this, I've not got the organisational skills or you know going to the last placement I was in, up to interim, you just seem to be the guy, my tutor seemed to be destroying me all the time, saying nothing good, but I just kept on going and getting there. I was not going to be defeated. I turned it around and yeah, it's just a culmination of everything. For me in the first 3 years, and this is rightly or wrongly, to have teachers that the uni provided, that were nice people but too kind and they weren't doing the job properly. So all the tasks we were supposed to do they weren't bothered, weren't checking. They just said 'DD is a nice person, DD is this, blah, blah, blah' and not really focusing on the academic side of all the things we were meant to be doing. So in the 4<sup>th</sup> year the person I was working with at school was on to all that and he was like 'you need to do this, you've not done this, done that' because it was my fault but I was not used to it, nobody checking things. It wasn't the matrix but the little details, took me back a bit, all the extra work. Put a lot more pressure on me.

Commented [CW9]: Positioning as struggling

Commented [CW10]: Strength of language used. Emotional reply helping make sense of his positional identity. Perezhiwanie

Commented [CW11]: Emotive language. Demonstrating the battle to be positioned as important and effective as a teacher. 'hard won standpoints'

Commented [CW12]: Positioning self as strong-go-to masculine trait, offset positioning as initial statement of not being able to do this job.

Commented [CW13]: Reference to teacher-mentor's inability to do their job enables R to reposition and off-set the low status positioning of student teacher.

Commented [CW14]: Parody-weakening the voices of authority. Heteroglossic interaction.

Commented [CW15]: Self-authoring as weak and struggling.

CW: how did you manage to get through the 3 years?

R: I just think people weren't doing their jobs properly. I meant me as well. If anybody gives me the opportunity, I'm lazy, I'll do the least work as possible, I will only do something if I need to do it. If I'd have had the teacher I had in Y in Y1 then it wouldn't have happened. But because of the progress I had and seeing in those 3 years that things were not getting stringently checked. The basic things were but the other things around that weren't getting checked so I'll just focus on the main things and if you pull me on others I'll do them. However, if I turn that around and if I had had that experience in the first year and not the fourth year I would never had go to that situation anyway. It's my, I own up to it, I should have been doing it for my satisfaction but seeing that I was passing anyway. I'll do what I have to do and get by. Things are popping into my head now. In year 3 we were meant to have RoLos done every week, maths and English every week and foundation not sure anyway, my roles were all done the night before my tutor came into check. They were just made up. It's going on all the time.

Commented [CW16]: Self-authoring using cultural symbols drawn from monoglossic gender matrix

Commented [CW17]: Clearly answering his teacher-mentors within the interview. Formulating replies.

Commented [CW18]: Teacher-mentors not fulfilling expectations. Co-construct their positioning with me in interview as we both know what they should and should not be doing. Help him answer his weak positioning as a student teacher? Polyphonic voices within the interview situation.



it's not just me that has experienced this, there are others. This is the reality of the situation. For these teachers, they haven't got the time, you've agreed to have me in there and you need to support me. So when you're in there and you see that happening...

CW: did you not flag this up to the uni tutor?

R: I couldn't, I didn't feel I could. she was being very kind in the first place, so I just thought it wasn't fair and I wouldn't say she'd lie or anything like that it's just that they were being done, not really useful, done the night before. It's a bit wishy washy. Because these things were happening up to year 3 and then in year 4 when someone started taking it seriously and professional where it has been a bit wishy washy. In the year 4 placement the teacher and the mentor they were up to 4 weeks they were [on top of it], up to interim and then they totally changed. I have no idea what happened. They just seemed so much more relaxed and in hindsight from my side, obviously you would have to speak to them, but maybe the uni tutor from here gave them a grilling and told him things straight or he tried to break me in the first 4 weeks and when I kept coming back and coming back stronger I like to think, like one of the points in my final rolo, was that I was very tenacious and a lesser person would have quit, so I think for the first 4 weeks he tried to break me and when he couldn't break me he just relaxed with me. I think but I don't know.

**Commented [CW19]:** Using voices of others to make a stronger point-multivoicedness

**Commented [CW20]:** Positioning teaching as high status and important and himself within this cultural model.

**Commented [CW21]:** Teacher-mentors not fulfilling expectations. Co-construct their positioning with me in interview as we both know what they should and should not be doing. Help him answer his weak positioning as a student teacher?

**Commented [CW22]:** Emotive language-emotions helping him make sense of himself-cultural tools. Perezhivanie?

**Commented [CW23]:** He references the power and resolve he uses to win the battle, developing a reply to his position as a student teacher. His choice of words suggest resilience in the face of adversity and aid visualisation of the story he wants to tell